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No longer living as the Gentiles : differentiation and shared ethical values in Ephesians 4.17 - 6.9

Darko, Daniel Kwaku

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KING'S COLLEGE LONDON
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NO LONGER LIVING AS THE GENTILES: DIFFERENTIATION AND SHARED ETHICAL VALUES IN EPHESIANS 4.17 – 6.9

A Dissertation submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

DANIEL KWAKU DARKO

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ABSTRACT

The starting point of this work is an observed tension in recent scholarly discussion of the ethical content of Ephesians 4.17-6.9. On the one hand, Ephesians 4.17-5.21 has been interpreted as drawing a social or ethical contrast between the addressees and the outside world, and even as encouraging or legitimating social withdrawal or separation from outsiders. On the other hand, the household code in Ephesians 5.21-6.9 has been read as encouraging integration into the wider society in an attempt to curb accusations of social disruptiveness. These social goals seem to be at odds, but rarely is this reflected on or addressed in scholarship. Upon a close and detailed study that utilizes traditional exegetical methods, comparative analysis and social identity theory, this thesis argues that Ephesians 4.17-6.9 exhibits a consistent strategy of promoting group distinctiveness while utilizing Greco-Roman ethical values and traditions to promote internal cohesion among the readers. In Ephesians 4.17-5.21, the author uses a rhetoric of differentiation to distinguish his readers from outsiders yet the ethics he espouses are commonly held traditions and moral values. The household code in Ephesians 5.21-6.9, which is grammatically and conceptually linked to the preceding ethical instruction (4.17-5.21), transforms conventional household morality into group-specific ethics to enhance mutuality among the readers in their households. Thus, the readers are encouraged neither to separate from society nor to integrate further into it, but to live and function within society as members of the 'household of God' in one accord.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
Ang	*Angelos*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	*Biblical Interpretation*
BR	*Biblical Research*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
ConJ	*Concordia Journal*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CRAI	Comptes rendus de I'Académie des inscriptions et belles-letters
CSR	*Christian Scholar's Review*
CT	*Christianity Today*
CTR	*Criswell Theological Review*
DLNT	*Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*
DNTB	*Dictionary of New Testament Background*
DPL	*Dictionary of Paul and the Letters*
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
DSS	*Dead Sea Scrolls*
ECC	*Early Christianity in Context*
ERT	*Evangelical Review of Theology*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
Evangel	*Evangel*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
GNTC	Greek New Testament Commentaries
GTJ	*Grace Theological Journal*
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HR	*History of Religion*
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	*Interpretation*
IRM	*International Review of Mission*
JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JBE	*Journal of Biblical Equality*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JS	*Journal of Semantics*

JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSP	*Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
JTSA	*Journal of Theology of South Africa*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LXX	Septuagint
Neot	*Neotestamentica*
NIBNTT	*New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTG	New Testament Guides
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NTT	New Testament Theology
PNTC	The Pillar New Testament Commentary
PGM	The Greek Magical Papyri
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
RivB	*Rivista Biblica*
RSR	*Religious Studies Review*
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
Semeia	*Semeia*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and Its World
SP	Sacra Pagina
ST	*Studia Theologica*
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha
SwJT	*Southwestern Journal of Theology*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TJCT	*Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*
TLNT	*Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*
TTP	Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
TSAJ	Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
VC	*Vigiliae Christiianae*
VE	*Vox Evangelica*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WD	Wort und Dienst
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
YCS	*Yale Classical Studies*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und Kunde der älteren Kirche*

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In the last twenty years or so in scholarship on Ephesians, more attention has been given to the question of authorship, the relationship between Ephesians and Colossians, and the rhetorical strategy of the letter[1] (epideictic [1-3] and deliberative rhetoric [4-6])[2] but there has been little discussion on the overall ethical teaching (content) of the letter and its social implications. Moreover, where aspects of the ethical material are addressed there are tendencies to examine individual pericopes or a few verses without necessarily showing their coherence with the overall moral discourse.[3] Usually, the commentators highlight the overarching theme of unity permeating the letter.[4] Scholars have tended to find ethical and social dualities[5] in 4.17-5.21, with the readers being encouraged to

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[1]See Gerhard Sellin, "Die Paränese des Epheserbriefes" in *Gemeinschaft am Evangelium. Festschrift für Wiard Popkes zum 60* (eds. E. Brandt et al.; Leipzig: EVA, 1996), 281-300.

[2]Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas: Word Books, 1990). Also John Muddiman, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (NBC; London: Continuum, 2001), 43-47 and Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 215-216.

[3]C. Mack Roak, "Interpreting Ephesians 4-6: God's People in a Walk Worthy of His Calling," *SwJT* 39.1 (1996): 32-42 and Nathan Larry Baker, "Living the Dream: Ethics in Ephesians," *SwJT* 22.1 (1979): 39-55. These are the only two articles I have found that attempt to discuss the overall ethical teaching of Ephesians. However, neither article is critical discussion on ethics in Ephesians but rather an overview of chapters 4-6. Roak's article forms part of an issue of the journal that is entitled 'Ephesians' that gives a general overview of the letter. Baker's article is a theological reflection of the last three chapters of the letter and the practical outworking thereof.

[4]See Andrew T. Lincoln and A.J.M. Wedderburn, *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters* (NTT; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 118-119, Ernest Best, *Ephesians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 644, Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians* (trans. H. Heron; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 34, Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 38, Pheme Perkins, *Ephesians* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 20.

[5]See N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992), 252-257. Wright indicates that the indiscriminate use of the term dualism or dualistic has rather made its meaning somewhat ambiguous in biblical scholarship. He therefore calls for the need for specificity where a particular duality denotes dualism in the real sense of the word and where the binary issue is a form of duality that is not necessarily a dualism. He argues that out of the ten ways in which the term dualism is used in Biblical theology, only three out of the ten dualities could be appropriately referred to as dualism or dualistic in nature. I think Wright makes an important observation so I will use the term duality/dualities in a general sense, except where the issue for discussion has been considered as being

differentiate or dissociate from outsiders, while 5.21-6.9 is understood to be promoting social integration. I will review scholarship on this matter and highlight an anomaly in the prevailing discussion that will be addressed in this work.

1.1 RESEARCH CONTEXT: RECENT DISCUSSION OF EPHESIANS 4.17-6.9

The review will be conducted in two main parts. The first section will focus on 4.17-5.21 which is read as promoting distinction or even separation from the outside world. The second part will focus on 5.21-6.9 and its social implications. Consequently, I will highlight an apparent tension that is rarely noted, let alone explained, in the prevailing discussion on the paraenesis – the issue that has prompted this investigation.

1.1.1 EPHESIANS 4.17 – 5.21

Ephesians 4.17-5.20 (21) is read by most interpreters as depicting unbelievers in the most pessimistic and darkest terms and urging the readers to differentiate themselves from the outside world. Ernest Best reckons that the depiction of the world in this part of the letter 'seems unbearably harsh.'[6] In an essay entitled 'Two Types of Existence', Best argues that a sharp distinction between believers and unbelievers permeates the entire epistle. Thus,

> unbelievers are dead in sin (2.1,5) and belong to the sphere of the devil (2.2); they are under the control of the 'powers'(6.12) and subject to the wrath of God (2.3). Believers, however, are 'in Christ', members of his body, built into his temple and belonging to his kingdom (2.19-22; 4.11-16; 5.6); they have been enlightened (1.18) and are already raised with Christ and sit with him in the heavenly places (2.6).[7]

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dualistic by other scholars or where the context for discussion leaves no ambiguity. I will also return in the fifth chapter to Wright's case for the need for precise and cautious use of the term dualism.

[6]Ernest Best, "Ephesians: Two Types of Existence," *Int* XLVII.1 (1993): 39-50; repr. in *Essays on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 143-148.

[7]Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 143.

Best likens what he explains as a contrast between 'Christian and non-Christian existence or pagan ways'[8] in the paraenesis to sectarian features in the early church. He argues that as minority groups (church groups), unbearable hostility and pressures from the dominant culture had led them to distance themselves from the rest of society.[9] He explains what he meant by an early Christian 'sect' thus:

> The early Christian communities must have seen themselves as very different from those outside them, and those outside them must have regarded these communities as very odd. Christian communities no longer took any part in the civic religions of their area, for they involved idolatry…So not only the common beliefs of Christians but also pressure from the outside world would have driven them in on themselves and led them to judge the outside world harshly (5.16; 6.13).[10]

Here Best suggests that the antithesis is to an extent a realistic social comparison and encourages some degree of social withdrawal,[11] though elsewhere he argues that it is a contrast between "an old mind-set and a new mind-set or an old lifestyle and a new lifestyle."[12] Best questions how an author who uses traditional ethical material could encourage such distinction[13] and explains that he seems to exaggerate prevailing vices in the outside world in order to make the insider-outsider distinction more vivid.[14]

Rudolf Schnackenburg establishes at the beginning of his discussion on 4.17-5.14 that it is all about social comparison between insiders and outsiders. He entitles the discussion 'Christian existence in a pagan environment"[15] and argues that this pattern extends to 5.15-20.[16] He asserts,

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[8]Best, *Ephesians*, 414, 425.
[9]Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 152-155.
[10]Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 153.
[11]Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 154-155.
[12]Best, *Ephesians*, 441.
[13]Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 143-145. Also Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 210.
[14]Best, *Ephesians*, 424.

[15]Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians – A Commentary* (trans. Helen Heron; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 192.
[16]Schnackenburg, *Ephesians-B*, 216.

> Christian existence in this world can be distinguished from a way of life alienated from God and wrapped up in worldly matters. After this negative dissociation from the environment there (4.17-5.14) then emerges a new turning point in 5.15, where attention is once more directed to existence and life in the church.[17]

He further argues that the author's call for separation is prompted by the need to save his readers from "becoming assimilated to the style of life prevalent in their environment."[18] He therefore asserts that, "the sharp, disparaging portrayal of the non-Christian outsiders is determined by time and circumstances."[19] For Schnackenburg, Ephesians promotes a "radical distinction or withdrawal from non-Christian environment"[20] and separation of "the Christians from the immoral, pagan way of life."[21] Matera reiterates this in his discussion on ethics in Ephesians:

> The Paul who writes Ephesians envisions a stronger separation between church and world. The world is a place where the disobedient dwell in darkness while the church is – or should be - populated by children of light. The moral life, according to Ephesians, requires a strong sense of moral identity and clear lines of demarcation between the children of light and the children of darkness.[22]

Some articles comparing dualities in Ephesians and the DSS have been influential on the current interpretations of 4.17-5.21, especially the light-darkness contrast in 5.8-14 (though some of them were published earlier). Georg Kuhn observes parallels in the two and suggests that the DSS and Ephesians share a common tradition.[23] For Kuhn, the light-darkness contrast in Ephesians mirrors dualistic features in the DSS where "light and darkness are seen as the two opposing modes of *human* existence."[24]

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[17]Schnackenburg, *Ephesians-B*, 192.
[18]Schnackenburg, *Ephesians-B*, 195, 202.
[19]Schnackenburg, *Ephesians-B*, 202, 214.
[20]Schnackenburg, *Ephesians-B*, 193, 231.
[21]Schnackenburg, *Ephesians-B*, 217.
[22]Matera. *New Testament Ethics*, 222.
[23]K. G. Kuhn, "Der Epheserbrief im Lichte der Qumrantexte," *NTS* 7 (1960-61): 334-346 repr. in *Paul and Qumran: Studies in New Testament Exegesis* (ed. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), 115-131. This article is constantly referred to in commentaries when the light-darkness duality in Ephesians is discussed.
[24]Kuhn, *Paul and Qumran*, 123.

He therefore asserts that Ephesians 5.9-11 calls for *exactly the same as* the Qumran-type of dualism ('genau dasselbe wie der Gegensatz Licht-Finsternis in den Qumrantexten').[25] Culpepper reiterates that Ephesians calls for differentiation from the world in a similar fashion as one finds in Qumran.[26] He asserts that,

> The ethical dualism of Ephesians, however, demands that the church recognize that it is radically and essentially different from the society around it and that under the power of the Holy Spirit it is to live by values often as opposite the society's values as light is opposite and incomparable with darkness.[27]

Subsequently, Nils Dahl's comparative study of the DSS and Ephesians has also led to the conclusion that Ephesians shares the dualism that one finds in Qumran. By definition, Dahl's notion of dualism is that "the ontological nature of cosmic reality is divided between two opposing principles, which are described as (a) Good and Evil with respect to *Ethics,* (b) Light and Darkness with respect to *physics,* and (c) Truth and Error with respect to *knowledge.*"[28] He argues that the light-darkness contrast, the notion of 'the Prince of the power of the air (2.2)' and the motif of cosmic battle in Ephesians express the same kind of dualism that one finds in the DSS. However, Dahl contends that "in both Qumran and Ephesians the dualism is only secondarily thought of in ontological terms: its primary reference is to the *ethical* way that men walk under the impulses of the twin spirits."[29]

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[25]Kuhn, "Der Epheserbrief im Lichte der Qumrantexte," 339.

[26]R. Alan Culpepper, "Ethical Dualism and Church Discipline: Ephesians 4:25-5:20," *RevExp* 76 (1979): 529-539.

[27]Culpepper, "Ethical Dualism," 533.

[28]Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Studies in Ephesians* (WUNT; Eds. David Hellholm et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 113.

[29]Dahl, *Studies in Ephesians,* 117. Dahl argues that there are significant differences between the Qumran Literature and Ephesians despite the common features in ethical dualism. He also indicates that the dualistic thought pattern was prevalent in the ancient world prior to the establishment of the Qumran community (see pp. 117-137).

Pheme Perkins points to the characteristics of Qumran-type dualism in Ephesians but cautions against any reading that suggests social separation from the outside world.[30] According to Perkins, the notion of Qumran-type dualism may only "apply primarily to the activities that characterized the lifestyle of non-Christians."[31] Muddiman takes the position that while 4.17-5.20 shows an insider-outsider dichotomy between the church and the surrounding society,[32] it does not advocate "complete separation from the godless world."[33] He therefore treats the paraenesis as a call to be separated from the misconduct associated with the outsiders. For O'Brien, 4.17-5.20 espouses an insider-outsider contrast[34] and more specifically what he explains as a discernible contrast between Christian existence and lifestyle and their pagan environment, hence a realistic social comparison.[35] He therefore asserts that,

> Paul (of Ephesians) draws a sharp distinction between the life and behaviour of those who are God's holy people (5.3) and the surrounding society…the Apostle wants his Christian readers to realize that they are to live by values that are diametrically opposed to the standards of their contemporary world.[36]

Hoehner explains that 4.17-24 is a contrast between believers and unbelieving Gentiles in Ephesus[37] and "the believer is exhorted not to walk as the Gentiles who are alienated from God."[38] He further indicates that 4.25-32 addresses practical issues involved in the

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[30]Perkins, *Ephesians,* 117-118.
[31]Perkins, *Ephesians,* 118.
[32]Muddiman, *Ephesians,* 210, 215.
[33]Muddiman, *Ephesians,* 237.
[34]Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1999), 318, 355, 357-358, 365, 378.
[35] O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 318. I use the expressions 'realistic social comparison' or 'realistic comparison' to denote a comparison of actual state of affairs as verifiable or known to all members of society in a specific historical context as opposed to a particular religious worldview, ideological framework or an ingroup perception of outsiders.
[36]O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 318.
[37]Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 386, 582-583.
[38]Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 387.

insider-outsider contrast[39] that it "becomes progressively clear that the new lifestyle is to be diametrically opposed to the conduct of the unbelieving Gentiles mentioned in 4.14-19."[40] Thus, "to walk as unregenerate sinners runs counter to walking in love (5.3-6)."[41] He emphasizes that "Paul reminds the believers that they are children of light and their walk must demonstrate this fact. He exhorts them to refuse to participate with unbelievers in their act of disobedience."[42]

Lincoln argues that the paraenesis in 4.17-21 denotes a sharp contrast between 'Gentile thinking and conduct' and 'Christian thinking and conduct' that follows after the Jewish holiness code.[43] He explains this as a contrast between the surrounding society and the readers' new status in Christ and uses words like 'state', 'thinking', 'conduct' or 'living' to characterize the contrasted ways of life.[44] This antithesis is understood to run through 4.17-5.21 where he reckons that the vices "belong characteristically to those outside, with whom there must be no partnership."[45] Lincoln likens it to Qumran dualism and asserts that "as at Qumran, the light-darkness dualism in Ephesians concerns two ways of life."[46] He reiterates that, "for those who are called to be holy, what is appropriate is a radical distancing from the gross sexuality and sexual greed of the surrounding world."[47] Lincoln stresses the ethical nuances of the antithesis but he also seems to suggest that this would involve some degree of social withdrawal from the outsiders. The ethical emphasis is more pronounced in his assertion that,

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[39]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 614.
[40]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 641.
[41]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 651, 664-665.
[42]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 668.
[43]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 271.
[44]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 289-291.
[45]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 320, 325.
[46]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 327.
[47]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 333.

> The writer wants his readers to realize that the church is to live by values as radically opposed to that society's values as light is opposed to and incompatible with darkness. Yet it is interesting to note that this clear sense of being different from others is not meant to lead the church into isolationism or defeatism in relation to the world.[48]

In her 1988 monograph entitled *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Churches*, Margaret MacDonald applies sociological methods to Ephesians as part of her investigation into institutionalization in the Pauline corpus. Her thesis is that the Pauline corpus depicts progressive institutional development, commencing from the time of Paul up to the period of the deutero-Pauline letters. She adopts Berger and Luckmann's[49] models of the 'social world' and 'symbolic universe' and argues that they help to explain institutional development in the Pauline letters. Moreover, Holmberg[50] and Weber's[51] analysis of the effect of the absence of a charismatic leader in an institution's development is applied to the 'Pauline churches.' MacDonald argues that the Pauline and deutero-Pauline churches underwent a similar process of institutional development. The thesis and methodology are fairly justified in the work, though certain elements in it remain debatable. In assessing the undisputed Pauline letters, she uses the 'conversionist sect' model rooted in Bryan Wilson's *Sects and Society*[52] to explore what she describes as "Christian attitudes to the outside world as well as the ethical stance adopted by communities at once separated from, and rooted in, the realities of that world."[53] She

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[48]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 335.

[49]Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966).

[50]Bengt Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).

[51]Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (3 vols.; New York: Bedminster Press, 1968).

[52]Bryan Wilson, *Sects and Society* (London: Morrison and Gibb, 1967).

[53]Margaret Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings* (SNTMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 31.

argues that the conversionist sect model befits the status of the Pauline readership and examines their distinctiveness as such. MacDonald states,

> The sect must remain unspotted from the world; its distinctiveness must be evident to both its own members and outsiders. However, if a 'conversionist sect' is to be successful in the missionary enterprise, it must be willing to enter into dialogue with others and, indeed, present itself as a distinctive and attractive alternative to the other groups vying for allegiance.[54]

The recipients of the undisputed Pauline letters are assumed to be facing the dilemma of maintaining their distinctiveness while seeking to evangelize the wider world.

MacDonald places Ephesians within the period of 'community-stabilizing institutionalization' where the absence of a charismatic figure like Paul and increasing numerical growth[55] necessitated the formation of more stabilized leadership and institutional structures. She examines Ephesians in the light of unity in the church and attempts to show how the 'conversionist sect model,' which was used to examine the undisputed Pauline letters, could help to explain the discrepancy in 'avoiding and evangelizing outsiders' in Ephesians. MacDonald claims that the recipients of Ephesians are urged to separate themselves from the outside world in order to curb the influence and infiltration of imposters.[56] She contends here that "the strong language of separation does not, however, lead to introversion."[57] However, she has subsequently reversed her earlier judgment and has argued that "Ephesians represents an

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[54]MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*, 39-40.

[55]See Rick Strelan, *Paul, Artemis and the Jews in Ephesus* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1996), 250ff and Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 152-154. Both Strelan and Best argue that the church did not see the kind of growth being suggested here by MacDonald but rather constituted a minority sect struggling for survival.

[56]MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*, 91, 99-102 and Margaret Y. MacDonald, "Citizens of Heaven and Earth: Asceticism and Social Integration in Colossians and Ephesians," in *Asceticism in the NT* (ed. L. E. Vaage and V.L. Wimbush; New York: Routledge, 1999), 272. She sees a polemic in Ephesians, which is very unlikely.

[57]MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*, 102.

'introversionist' response to the world"[58] and "demonstrates a much stronger sense of introversion."[59] Apparently, "in comparison to other Pauline works Ephesians suggests a greater introversion with respect to the outside world. Even its household teaching is presented as part of a plan for believers to set themselves apart from nonbelievers (4.17-5.21)."[60] It is noteworthy that MacDonald treats Ephesians and Colossians together and often implies that they address similar situations.[61] Meanwhile, it is now the view of most scholars that Ephesians does not espouse any explicit polemic in the manner that MacDonald suggests, thereby rendering her interpretation quite misleading.[62]

MacDonald has argued in her commentary, *Colossians and Ephesians*, that Ephesians 4.17-5.20 indicates a sharp contrast between the ingroup and outgroup in a manner that typifies an introversionist community.[63] She argues that this world rejection was prompted by threat from the outside world. Colossians is understood as calling for similar distinction but, unlike Ephesians, it gives room for contact with outsiders.

> But when (Eph) 4.17-5.20 is considered as a unit one is struck by the length of the exhortation devoted to encouraging separation and one senses a great emphasis on solidarity in the face of menacing evil...A comparison of 5.15-16 to Col 4.5 is also instructive for gaining a sense of the intensity of world rejection one detects in Ephesians.[64]

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[58]Margaret Y. MacDonald, "The Politics of Identity in Ephesians," *JSNT* 26.4 (2004):423.

[59]Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians* (SP; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 321, 338.

[60]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 338.

[61]MacDonald, "Citizens of Heaven and Earth," 287 and MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*, 103-138. She indicates that apart from the issue of 'false teaching' in Colossians both letters reflect a similar kind of situation hence the frequency of the words 'Colossians and Ephesians' as the letters being treated together in the *Pauline Churches*. However, she points out some differences between the two letters in the article entitled 'Citizens of Heaven and Earth' (pp. 287-390) but does not carry it through in her discussion on the *Haustafel*.

[62]MacDonald's argument for possible infiltrators and her later assertion that the household codes are designed to calm possible tensions between believers and unbelievers (*Pauline Churches*, 109) are guided by this misleading approach to Ephesians. It is necessary that Ephesians be treated as a letter on its own merit without being overshadowed by Colossians if we want to understand the message therein.

[63]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 321.

[64]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 321.

On the parallels of DSS and Ephesians, she notes that, "Ephesians lacks evidence of the clearly articulated, visible, physical measures to encourage segregation that we find in the QL. But it is possible that the act of withdrawal, though different, is equally intense."[65] Thus, MacDonald contends that a threat from the outside world has consequently led to world rejection.

In summary, the review of 4.17-5.20/21 shows a common understanding of the textual unit, either in part or as a whole, as sharply distinguishing insider-outsider behaviour or legitimating some form of withdrawal from the outside world. However, there is no consensus on its exact nature, whether it is mainly a call for social withdrawal or an ethical dualism in the form of social comparison showing a distinction between the conduct of unbelievers/outsiders and the believers. Some scholars stress its ethical import above social withdrawal, whereas others argue for social withdrawal from the outside world with no clarity as to the degree of separation. Yet, others liken it to what one finds in DSS, which they refer to as 'two opposing ways of life.' What they mean by Qumran-type dualism is quite obscure. Esler explains the common notion of Qumran dualism, though commenting on the DSS and the Johannine community, that it is "a form of sectarianism which was powerfully introversionist."[66] We can only assume that Kuhn and Culpepper, among others, may have had this form of introverted community in mind when they argued that Ephesians espouses similar dualism. However, MacDonald unambiguously contends that the textual unit of 4.17-5.20 calls for an introversionist stance or world rejection, hence social separation from the outside world.

Thus, a social distinction is being drawn from 4.17-5.21 while some go as far as to

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[65]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 322.

[66]Philip F. Esler, *The First Christians in the Social Worlds- Social Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 1994), 84-91.

suggest that separation is being encouraged or legitimated in this part of the letter. The divergent interpretation of the social import of 4.17-5.21 requires clarification, whether it is social withdrawal, introversionism or a realistic comparison of insider-outsider ethics. More so, the way this differentiation[67] relates to the apparent integrative strategy of the *Haustafel* lies at the heart of this inquiry.

1.1.2 EPHESIANS 5.21/22 – 6.9

The view that the *Haustafel* in Ephesians is derived from a widespread topos of 'household management' in the Greco-Roman world has been widely accepted in modern scholarship since the publication of David Balch's monograph, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Codes in 1 Peter*, in 1981.[68] Here, Balch argues that the domestic code in 1 Peter is adopted from the Greco-Roman topos on 'household management' for apologetic reasons to curb potential criticisms against the disruption of civic order and also to integrate the church into the wider society. Ephesians is assumed to have adopted the hierarchical structure in like manner to integrate its readers into the wider society.[69] Surprisingly, there seems to be little reflection on the fact that ethical instruction that calls for withdrawal or segregation from the outsiders (as shown above), on one hand, and integration into society, on the other hand, leaves a tension in the social outlook or strategy of Ephesians 4.17-6.9. In other words, an ethical discourse that is read to be encouraging its readers to distance themselves from outsiders in 4.17-

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[67]The term differentiation is used in this work in a general sense to embody ideological distinction, ethical or social separation. I will therefore provide an adjective to qualify its specific usage where it refers to ideological distinction or different social patterns that may not necessarily lead to social separation.

[68]David L. Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive: The Domestic Codes in 1 Peter* (SBLMS 26. Chico: Scholars Press, 1981). See more discussion in chapter four on how Balch has influenced the interpretation of the household code in Ephesians.

[69]See Pheme Perkins, "God, Cosmos & Church Universal: The Theology of Ephesians," in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* (2000): 764.

5.21 is purported to have a different social aim here to integrate the readers to the wider society.

Lincoln has argued that Ephesians adopted the hierarchical structure in order to promote assimilation into the wider society.[70] He explains that the *Haustafel* shows "a stage in which Christians were conscious of criticisms of subverting society and of the need to adjust to living in the Greco-Roman world without unnecessarily disrupting the status quo."[71] He further asserts that,

> The household codes of both Colossians and Ephesians do reflect a stage in the life of the Pauline churches in which they were coming to terms with their continuing existence over an extended period in society and accommodating to the structures that were held to provide stability of their society.[72]

Elsewhere, he outlines similar arguments as Balch and concludes that the early Christian *Haustafeln* have apologetic functions – not to upset the hierarchical structure of households or disturb the social order.[73] Ernest Best underscores the fact that "none of the sections in the *Haustafel* would have been out of accord with Hellenistic ethical thinking."[74] He argues that the code was not composed by the author of Ephesians, but rather it was 'received' and 'incorporated' into Ephesians.[75] Best indicates that a wider tradition was later incorporated into the paraenetic discourse in order to address some ongoing domestic problems facing some of the believers.[76] In other words, the household code is an outside moral value that has been incorporated to remedy

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[70]Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 360.
[71]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 360.
[72]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 390.
[73]Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Household Code and Wisdom of Colossians," *JSNT* 74 (1999):100-101.
[74]Ernest Best, *Essays on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 197and Best, *Ephesians*, 583. Also Sarah J. Tanzer, "Ephesians," in *Searching the Scriptures vol. 2: A Feminist Commentary* (ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; London: SCM Press, 1995), 340-341 and Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 251-257.
[75]Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 194-198.
[76]Best, *Ephesians*, 524.

misdemeanours among believers. The relationship between such polemic and his argument for 'two types of existence' is rather obscure in his commentary. Conversely, Peter O'Brien argues that the household code is meant to have some effect on the wider society.[77] He indicates that "while there is no mention of relationships with outsiders in the household code itself, Paul ties in appropriate behaviour with believers' wise behaviour in the world."[78] He further indicates that,

> Given the important emphasis of the household in the Greco-Roman world, relationship within the Christian home is bound to have an effect on the surrounding society…the early Christian household codes were, if anything, socially conservative, and show that believers were not about to overthrow the social order.[79]

MacDonald underlines the *Haustafel* in Ephesians as crucial for our understanding of the church's engagement with the Greco-Roman world.[80] Her treatment of the domestic codes in Ephesians and Colossians draws significantly from Balch's monograph and suggests that they similarly have Hellenistic origin and apologetic functions. She asserts,

> The reinforcement of the household ethic in the Christian community may be related to the social situation of a sect which has a precarious relationship with the outside world. The negative reaction of outsiders can threaten the sect's cohesion, its God-given elect status, and its evangelizing vision. The sect may need to demonstrate that conversion does not necessarily lead to household disruption.[81]

It is in this vein that she insists that "Ephesians 5.21-6.9 seems particularly well suited to be encouraging church members to be integrated (at least physically) within Greco-Roman society."[82] In other words, the Ephesians *Haustafel* not only adopts the conventional ethos but is also crafted to suit the conventional form of household

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[77]Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 407.
[78]O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 407.
[79]O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 407.
[80]MacDonald, *Pauline Churches,* 102.
[81]MacDonald, *Pauline Churches,* 109.
[82]MacDonald, "Citizens of Heaven and Earth," 289.

management rules in order to integrate and curb potential troubles for the church. MacDonald refers to the readers of Ephesians sometimes as introversionist in *Pauline Churches* and in subsequent works as a 'conversionist sect.'[83] In other words, she argues for a separatist stance in 4.17-5.21 and a *Haustafel* that has both integrative and apologetic functions, yet she fails to clarify how this tension is supposed to be actualized.

Subsequently, Perkins[84] (1997) and Muddiman[85] (2001) draw from MacDonald's *Pauline Churches* and Balch, among others, to reiterate that the code in Ephesians is derived from the Greco-Roman environment and has a function to integrate the church into the wider society for apologetic reasons.[86] For Muddiman, the apologetic purpose of the household code is necessitated by the need to deflect suspicions from outsiders. He argues that an early Christian teaching that appeared to encourage insubordination for the wife and slave in the household must have left the church in such a vulnerable state.[87] Recently, Hoehner has argued that the function of the household code is simply to promote unity that will consequently yield some degree of apologetic effect. He reckons that, "it was to display to the Roman world how believers who are transformed and empowered by the Holy Spirit function within a family structure."[88] In summary, not only MacDonald but the majority of scholars in recent years has argued that the *Haustafel* in Ephesians adopts a conventional household or patriarchal structure, which usually links the welfare of the household to the state, in order to integrate the church

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[83]See this discussion in the review of 4.17-5.21 in the early part of this chapter.
[84]Pheme Perkins, *Ephesians* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997).
[85]Muddiman, *Ephesians.*
[86]See Muddiman, *Ephesians,* 251.
[87]Muddiman, *Ephesians,* 251
[88]Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 727.

into the wider society. Thus, as Horrell puts it, "the hierarchical order of the Greco-Roman household is sustained and legitimated in a thoroughly Christian way."[89]

In conclusion, this review has shown that most scholars on Ephesians argue that its *Haustafel* also adapts the hierarchical/patriarchal structure for apologetic reasons – as an integrative mechanism to curb potential accusations of civic disorder. For MacDonald, it is also meant to create an appropriate platform for evangelization. Thus, there is a paradox, if not tension, in Ephesians where the readers are urged in 4.17-5.21 to differentiate themselves from outsiders while 5.21-6.9 is allegedly encouraging them to integrate into the same society.

1.1.3 AN APPARENT TENSION: AN ETHIC OF SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION AND AN ETHIC OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

As the review has shown, the current discussion on the paraenesis of Ephesians (4.17-6.9) seems to expose a tension in its social outlook. Incidentally, none of the works I have found to date explicitly identifies the tension or adequately addresses how a church that is supposed to be separated or be distinctive from outsiders can be encouraged to integrate into the same society simultaneously.[90] It is apparent in 4.17-5.21 that the author distinguishes the ingroup from outgroup by consistently using contrastive patterns of old and new (4.17-24), light and darkness (5.6-14), wisdom and folly (5.15-

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[89]David G. Horrell, "The Development of Theological Ideology in Pauline Christianity: A Structuration Theory Perspective," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social Scientific Studies of the NT in its Context* (ed. Philip F. Esler; London: Routledge, 1995), 233.

[90]See MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*, 33-42, 99-100. MacDonald's interpretation of the household in Ephesians is supposed to show how as a 'conversionist sect' the readers are being urged to evangelize the outside world, but it soon becomes clear to her that Ephesians cannot be made to fit into the model without difficulties. Consequently, she attempts to readjust the tenets of her model in order to make it fit. For example, she explains the features of a 'conversionist sect' to include self-definition, language of separation and belonging, 'strong interest in evangelization' and protest against the values and ideals of the outside world. However, she acknowledges the lack of explicit instruction to evangelize in Ephesians or a polemic that may resemble what one could deem a protest against outsiders (pp. 99-100). She therefore explains that an ethical influence on society is akin to protest/social engagement.

21), and virtues-vices (4.25 - 5.6). The nature of this antithesis has been explained in terms of social comparison between behavioural patterns of the believers and those of unbelievers or a call to withdraw from the unbelieving outsiders (world rejection). There is no consensus about its exact nature, but all agree that it is a call for some kind of distinction from the outside world – behaviourally, socially or both. So what is the nature of differentiation in Ephesians 4.17-5.20/21? Does the author seek to promote behavioural distinction or separation from the wider society? Is it a moral duality where the readers are being called upon to dissociate from the world characterized by moral failure in its entirety in realistic terms? If yes, then does the author advocate values that are significantly different from the moral traditions of the Greco-Roman world? How should the church dissociate from outsiders or their conduct and simultaneously conform to their behavioural and social patterns?

Conversely, the *Haustafel* in 5.21-6.9 seems to give Christological endorsement to the conventional norms regarding its management. Scholars have concluded that the hierarchical structure has been adopted from the *topoi* of 'household management,' which is important for civic order, in order to integrate the church in the wider society, as shown above. More so, the *Haustafel* in Ephesians, as in other NT letters, is considered to function apologetically as part of the author's strategy to deflect public criticisms or provide assurance to the dominant culture about their contribution to civic order. However, if the readers are being encouraged to dissociate from outsiders (ethically or socially), how far could they go to integrate into the larger society? Is it really the case that the readers who are being asked to withdraw from society are also being urged to integrate into that same society? If yes, does the paraenesis in Ephesians

then have two different social aims – to differentiate and to integrate its readers into the outside world? If no, then is it possible that this paradox or lack of consistency comes to the fore as a result of misinterpretation of Ephesians in its context? Clearly, there is a lack of consistency in the social strategy of a paraenesis that encourages withdrawal or introversionist stance on one hand, and seeks to integrate its readers to that very society on the other hand. Thus, the quest to understand the nature of differentiation in 4.17-5.20/21 and the social and rhetorical function of the household code require critical attention, and forms the main subject matter for this inquiry.

1.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODS

I will clarify the aims and methods that will be used to examine the social strategy of the paraenesis of Ephesians in this section. The main task will be approached from three main angles, namely textual analysis (i.e. exegetical), comparative analysis, and the use of social identity theory to augment traditional exegetical approaches in the analysis of the author's rhetoric and social strategy.

1.2.1 RESEARCH AIMS

The principal aim is to conduct a careful analysis of the paraenetic discourse in Ephesians 4.17-6.9 in order to determine the extent to which the author is consistent in his social and rhetorical strategy and his moral perspective. I will seek to answer these subsidiary questions in the course of the study: What is the nature of distinction being drawn in 4.17-5.21? Does the author operate with seemingly conflicting social strategies aiming at differentiation and integration? Is there a tension within the ethical discourse? If so, what is the nature of the tension, and how is it to be explained? To

what extent does the author use or draw from common moral values? Moreover, is the moral perspective of the letter consistent with its theological framework? I hope this inquiry and the findings will clarify the social and rhetorical strategy of the paraenesis of Ephesians.

1.2.2 TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

I will utilize traditional exegetical methods to examine Ephesians 4.17-6.9 in the light of the aim of this work. I will provide detailed and focused analysis of the rhetorical and social strategy of the paraenesis in its textual units. Where relevant to the discussion, I will pay close attention to the syntax and semantics of the passage under investigation. However, this exegetical analysis is not intended to attend to every issue in the textual units but only those aspects that relate to our subject matter. Three chapters will be devoted to exegetical analysis of Ephesians 4.17-6.9 in a manner that brings the nature of the author's rhetorical and social strategy to the fore. The study will also observe the author's use of conventional moral traditions in the passages that have been understood to be encouraging differentiation or integration.

1.2.3 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

My approach to the exegesis of the text will include a comparative analysis of Ephesians and the ethical values that were espoused by other Greco-Roman moralists in order to establish whether the author promotes different and counter-cultural values to mark social differentiation. In other words, does the letter espouse a counter-cultural set of values that is supposed to differentiate the readers ethically or socially from the outside world? Are the binary oppositions (e.g. virtues and vices) typical in conventional

rhetorical strategy for moral discourse? To what extent is the actual substance or content of the ethical teaching different from other Greco-Roman moral traditions? The *Haustafel* in Ephesians 5.21-6.9 will also be examined against the background of other household management rules in the Greco-Roman world as part of an inquiry into the validity of the prevailing view about its social outlook. If the author calls for social withdrawal from outsiders or introversionist stance, then a comparative analysis will help to clarify the social and/or moral boundaries, and if he is indeed urging his readers to integrate into the wider society, then it will be even more helpful to clarify the counter-cultural elements that are supposed to be abandoned in order to conform to the wider social norms. Thus, the comparative analysis will be extended to the discussion on the *Haustafel* in Ephesians.

By Greco-Roman moral traditions, I do not mean the popular culture of the day, since we do not have the means to reconstruct accurately how ordinary people lived their lives. I also do not imply a particular set of dominant or popular Greek values in the Hellenistic world. However, the moral traditions in view include dialogues and ethical treatises, principally from Greek, Roman and Hellenistic Jewish authors, that reflect moral discourses in the then world that have been preserved and are accessible in literary forms. The term Greco-Roman or Hellenic is not used strictly to exclude Jewish writers, since some Jewish authors utilize Greek and Roman ethical traditions and themes, as I will show below. As Levine aptly puts it,

> the Hellenistic world was the scene of a variable potpourri of cultural forces, marketplace of ideas and fashions from which one could choose. In this light, therefore, Hellenization is not merely an impact of Greek culture on a non-Greek world, but rather the interplay of a wide range of cultural forces on an *oikumene* (the civilized world as

> then known) defined in part – but not exclusively - by the Greek conquests of the fourth and third century BCE.[91]

It is also noteworthy that these writers (Greek, Roman or Jewish) were mainly cultural critics or advocates for moral excellence whose views do not necessarily reflect the views and actions of the masses. As one may find in Ephesians, their ethical precepts were mostly prescriptive in nature and not description of how their readers conducted themselves in society.

The scope of Greco-Roman material that will be used in the analysis falls within the wider context of what Wayne Meeks[92] and Abraham Malherbe[93] have considered as the 'Great moral traditions' in the NT world (fifth century BCE [Plato] to second century CE). Meeks and Malherbe have given an overview and profile of the most influential philosophers and traditions of the era and I will only make some comments on the main figures that will feature in this study. These authors will be brought into the discussion in so far as their subject matter has bearing on the issues being raised in Ephesians. In other words, I will not consider every aspect of their moral discourse but only those topics and issues that relate to ethics in Ephesians.

Plato (427-347 BCE) probably wrote most of his works during the fourth century BCE, and Diogenes and Isocrates[94] were his contemporaries. Accessibility to Plato's

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[91]Lee I. Levine, *Judaism & Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluent?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 19.

[92]Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 40-91. Meeks and Malherbe give an extensive overview of the moral world of the NT and concise profile of the moral philosophers in a manner that will not be duplicated here. Most NT scholars randomly use materials that fall within this scope as Greco-Roman evidence without any clarification.

[93] Abraham J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation, A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 11-21.

[94]Herodotus, probably born in Halicarnassus in 484 BCE, was earlier than Plato and his contemporaries but the nature of Greek philosophy was such that philosophers and rhetoricians either referred to or alluded to previous works or the legacy of prominent figures as they related to an issue being addressed or incorporated previous philosophers in discussions that focused on their particular philosophical traditions.

treatises and the rise of Platonic schools in the first century BCE to first century CE gave Plato prominence in ethical discourses during the NT era.[95] Aristotle (384-322 BCE), a pupil of Plato who entered his Athenian academy in 367 BCE, was influential owing to his large body of literary works that were discussed among philosophers and rhetoricians. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, in particular, will feature prominently in the analysis since they have more parallels with ethical issues in Ephesians. Aristotle's ethics is made up of lecture notes and moral discussions, perhaps intended "to be deposited in the school library for consultation."[96] His primary audience was young men, since the social status of women at the time did not make it possible for them to participate in such activities.[97] Aristotle's *Politics* is a continuation of his *Nicomachaean Ethics*. He considered political environment as integral to one's ability to live a virtuous life and make a meaningful contribution to society. "Political theory, then, is for Aristotle neither a distinct subject from moral theory nor the application of moral theory to the political sphere, rather, it is a discipline ancillary to moral theory."[98] Thus, he constructs his ethics in view of the fact that an individual's behaviour, private or public, ought to have a positive impact on society. Demosthenes (384-322 BCE) belongs to the Athenian school and was a popular figure in the political arena. The comparison of the works of Plato, Aristotle and even Demosthenes to the discourse in Ephesians, among others, is far from being anachronistic since they were also prominent voices in later years, despite the fact that their works dated centuries earlier.

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[95]H. Kraut, *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992). This book is a collection of useful essays on some of the main themes in Platonic treatises.

[96]J.O. Urmson, *Aristotle's Ethics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 6.

[97]D.S. Hutchinson, "Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle* (ed. J. Barnes; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 197-199.

[98]C.C.W. Taylor, "Politics," *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle* (ed. J. Barnes; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 233.

L. Mestrius Plutarch (*ca.* 45-120 CE), whose *Moralia* will feature prominently in this work, is a good example of the influence of Platonism in the first century CE. Plutarch was a Greek historian, biographer and moralist. Born in Chaeronea, he studied philosophy in Athens after the Platonic tradition. Plutarch's *Moralia* is a series of essays on sixty topics addressing issues relating to ethics, politics and religion.[99] Russell reckons that his ethics is very Platonic in substance and Aristotelian in choice of words.[100] Plutarch sometimes challenged some aspects of Stoic moral positions, and he is also known to have been more in touch with the concerns of ordinary people than were the Stoics. Russell asserts that Plutarch was,

> ...more closely in touch with common feeling than the Stoic, closer in fact to the common sentiments that we find in the unphilosophical morality of Greece from the time of Menander onwards. The standards of loyalty and faithfulness are valid for both sexes, the husband's duties as strict as the wife's. *Advice on Marriage* at least lets us glimpse this side of things. Pollianus and Eurydice, the couple to whom it is addressed, may be philosophers, but they are allowed to be human as well.[101]

Another influential figure that will be referred to in the analysis is a historian and teacher of rhetoric, Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Born in Halicarnassus in Asia Minor (first century BCE), he migrated to Rome where he gained fame for his teaching and writings, especially during the reign of Caesar Augustus. His *Roman Antiquities,* which is a very relevant source material for this work, provides a valuable account of Jewish and Roman history dating as far back as the beginning of the empire in the third century BCE.

The Stoic tradition was the most popular of all philosophical schools in the Greco-Roman world during the NT era. I will therefore engage with relevant Stoic material in this analysis, most notably the works of Gaius Musonius Rufus and his

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[99]See R. Lamberton, *Plutarch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 40-59. Lamberton provides a brief discussion on the nature of Plutarch's ethics and the topics he addresses.

[100]D.A. Russell, *Plutarch* (London: Duckworth, 2001), 84.

[101]Russell, *Plutarch,* 91.

pupils, Epictetus and Dio Chrysostom. Other philosophers with Stoic affinities that will be considered include Arius Didymus (first century BCE), Seneca (3 BCE - 65CE), Cicero (106-65 BCE) and Hierocles (second century CE). The fragments of the works of Arius Didymus that have survived indicate that his ethical stance lies between Stoic and Peripatetic ethics.[102] Seneca, a contemporary of Paul, was a philosopher, statesman and dramatist. His *Moral Essays* in particular, will feature in the analysis. Cicero provides a good insight into the political history of the Greco-Roman world in the years 80-43 BCE. His writings were in the form of "oratory, poetry, letters and historiography."[103] His orations and treatises are written in simple, unsophisticated and accessible style. As a statesman, he provides a useful record of events in the era. Some other Greek and Latin philosophers may be referred to but not as often as the ones indicated above.

Philo, Josephus, and Pseudo-Phocylides feature regularly in scholarly discussions on the moral world of the NT, and their works will also be referred to as source material in the comparative analysis. These writers will be attended in the analysis not only because they were Hellenistic Jews who wrote in a Hellenistic context but also because they engaged closely with, were influenced by and often represented the 'Hellenistic' moral traditions. A contemporary of Jesus and Paul, Philo knew "Plato as thoroughly as the Mosaic laws"[104] and did not differentiate his ethical precepts from the Greek philosophers. His ethics, though largely based on the Pentateuch, draw

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[102]Malherbe, *Moral Exhortations,* 17.

[103]Catherine Steel, *Reading Cicero: Genre and Performance in Late Republican Roman* (London: Duckworth, 2005), 49-82.

[104]Folker Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation in a Hellenistic Style," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Interpretation vol. 1* (ed. Magne Sæbø; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 164.

significantly from Plato, Homer, Aristotle and the Stoics.[105] He refers to Plato 'as the sweetest of all writers' or 'most holy Plato.'[106] Niehoff summarizes Philo's reference to some of the Greek writers rather well:

> Zeno is appreciated for having 'lived under the direction of virtue to an unsurpassed degree' (Lib. 53). Homer is identified as 'the greatest and most reputed of poets.' The words of Sophocles are in Philo's eyes 'as true as the Delphi oracles' (Lib. 19), while Euripides is frequently quoted as the quintessential tragedian whose pieces provoked overwhelming applause among the audience in the theatre (Lib. 14). The poets in general are spoken of as 'educators through all our days' who teach wisdom to the public in the same way as parents do to their children (Lib. 143). Philo hardly treats these writers as representative of a foreign or even other culture. Their works form natural part of his intimate intellectual environment.[107]

Philo's predecessor, Aristobulus, had made the claim that "Greek civilization had its source in Jewish tradition, as Greek philosophers such as Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle had drawn their inspiration from the Hebrew Bible."[108] Philo claimed superiority over Greek writers[109] and argued that "true wisdom of the Greeks was derived from the Bible."[110] Philo also directed his efforts to seek "total harmony between Jewish and Greek concepts and values."[111] Thus, Philo is a good source material for our understanding of both Greek and Hellenistic Jewish ethical precepts in the NT era. As Borgen rightly notes, "in modern historical research, Philo is studied as a source book for Greek philosophy, as a representative of Second Temple Judaism and a forerunner of

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[105]Ronald Williamson, *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Philo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 202 and 206-207.

[106]Philo, *Every Good Man is Free,* 13

[107]Maren R. Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture* (TSAJ 86; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 138-139. See also Jutta Leonhardt, *Jewish Worship in Philo of Alexandria* (TSAJ 84; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001). Leonhardt's work is principally devoted to the study of Philo's approach or treatment of Jewish worship (e.g. rituals and festivals) and its parallels in Hellenistic philosophy.

[108]Lee I. Levine, *Judaism & Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluent?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 25.

[109]Niehoff, *Philo on Jewish Identity and Culture,* 138-141. Niehoff argues that this type of reasoning was rather common among Jews, especially Alexandrian Jews, in the era. Niehoff further gives a detailed and very useful account of Philo's use of Greek writers and philosophers (pp, 138-158).

[110]Peder Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (ed. Michael E. Stone; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 233.

[111]Levine, *Judaism & Hellenism in Antiquity,* 30.

early Christian thought."[112] His works are considered in three main categories (genres), namely allegorical interpretation of Genesis (G), exposition of the Law (L) and thematic writings (e.g. Hypothetica). The thematic treatises generally address issues relating to the social and religious life of the Jews in Diaspora. However, he engages with Greek philosophers throughout his writings.[113] The Philonic treatises that will be drawn into this analysis are mainly part of his expositions of the Law and the thematic writings where he discusses relevant ethical precepts for his Hellenistic Jewish audience.[114]

The status of Josephus and the value of his works to our understanding of the Greco-Roman world do not require extensive treatment since that is undisputable fact. As a historian, he endeavours to give accounts of events and issues relating to Jewish encounters with the non-Jewish world.[115] Some of his writings were intended to benefit both Jews and Gentiles in the first century CE. For instance, his *Antiquities of the Jews* and *Against Apion* were meant to inform non-Jews about Jewish faith and customs. Whiston states the significance of Josephus' works to NT studies:

> It is difficult to overemphasize the contribution of Josephus to our understanding of the social world, political and religious milieu of the New Testament era. While it is clear that Josephus was not completely unbiased in his writing..., he is nevertheless very reliable as a historian and deserving of careful study by the serious reader.[116]

His *Against Apion* is the most useful to this particular work. In this treatise, Josephus gives an apology to the Greeks who had maligned the Jews and would not accept that their ancient Jewish tradition (from Moses) had been an inspiration for subsequent

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[112]Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria," 280.

[113]See Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 29-81 and Borgen, "Philo of Alexandria," 233-282. Sandmel and Borgen provide more comprehensive profiles of Philo and Philonic writings, their genre, content and style.

[114]See Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation in a Hellenistic Style," 178-187. He explains the specific treatises that fall under these major headings and what they entail.

[115]See Levine, *Judaism & Hellenism in Antiquity,* 28-30.

[116]William Whiston, "Introduction," in *The Works of Josephus* (Grand Rapids: Hendrickson, 1987), ix.

Greek philosophical discourse. He therefore defends the legitimacy and values of Jewish traditions in *Against Apion,* a work on which we will draw especially in our discussion on the household code.

The third Hellenistic Jewish author that will feature in the analysis is Pseudo-Phocylides (first century BCE - first century CE). Pseudo-Phocylides was familiar with the Septuagint, Stoic ethics and other philosophical traditions. In the poem of 230 lines, Pseudo-Phocylides presents ethical maxims that seek to harmonize Jewish and Gentile values into universal ethical principles. His work reflects the ethical positions of the philosophical traditions in its milieu.[117] Van der Horst reckons that Pseudo-Phocylides "took over many maxims from Greek authors before him."[118] There is "a constant search for universal ethics which shuns particularistic elements and is not averse to the good and useful elements in the ethics of surrounding people."[119] The usefulness of this text to our understanding of Greek and Jewish ethics in the time that Ephesians was written cannot be underrated. It is argued that Pseudo-Phocylides was written either for fun, which is very unlikely, or most probably as van der Horst states,

> The author wanted to say to his fellow Jews: Look, the best of Greek ethics agrees with the Law, so do not be ashamed of your own tradition over against the Greeks and do not be afraid that you have missed anything by being Jewish (3) The author directed himself to the heathen, not in order to make converts to Judaism (which would be impossible by means of such a poem), but in order to make 'sympathizers', that is, to win over people to a standpoint more sympathetic to Judaism so as to break through isolation of the Jews in the Hellenistic world.[120]

This is to say that any of these plausible reasons given for its composition further underscore that such a work is a very significant representation of Greco-Roman values

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[117]P.W. van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides with Introduction and Commentary* (SVTP 4; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 64.

[118]P.W. van der Horst, "Pseudo-Phocylides – A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha vol. 2* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 568.

[119]van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides,* 67.

[120]van der Horst, "Pseudo-Phocylides," 565-566.

for both Jews and Greeks. It is noteworthy that it was not unusual for Jewish authors in this period to draw from Greek philosophical traditions as part of a strategy to humanize pagan societies or to create a moral level ground for Jews and Gentiles.[121] Thus, Philo, Josephus and Pseudo-Phocylides will be engaged with in the work at the same level as the Greek and Latin moralists in the comparative analysis.

The *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* will not feature in the main discussion due to unsettled issues surrounding its authenticity, composition and dating. The commentators on Ephesians often cite it unreservedly to show close parallels, but the nature of this work will make it possible only to deal with less problematic texts in the main discussion.[122]

1.2.4 SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

If Ephesians 4.17-6.9 is read as a prescriptive discourse, then one may not assume that it constitutes a concrete historical account of how the readers dissociated from 'outgroupers'[123] and simultaneously sought to integrate into the wider society. Moreover, it cannot be assumed that the addressees would have adhered to every detail of the paraenesis line-by-line like a road map to godly living, if we accept that the text is not a historical narrative. However, since what we have is generally accepted as a

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[121]van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, 73.

[122]See James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Apocalyptic Literature & Testaments* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 775–780 and Marinus De Jonge, *Jewish Eschatology, Early Christian Christology and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: Collected Essays of Marinus De Jonge* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 154-237. A comprehensive discussion on the problem and character of the text is given in this section of the book. The *TTP* was originally composed by a Hellenistic Jew in approximately 250 BCE. However, its resemblance with the Johannine epistles and apparent Christian interpolations in the early part of the second century CE have cast doubts on its distinctively Jewish character.

[123]See Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (London: Routledge, 1988), 21. The terms 'outgroupers' and 'ingroupers' are used by these sociologists to indicate members of the outgroup and ingroup and it is in this sense I use these terms in the work.

general letter, is it possible that the paraenesis forms how the author seeks to construct the moral identity of his readers (cf. 4.1-3)? If yes, then could social identity theory be of any help in the quest to understand the social strategy of the author? I have found it useful to utilize social identity theory to aid the analysis of the text since the passages being examined raise the question of identity of the readers vis-à-vis outsiders. There are two aspects of social-scientific criticism, as explained by John Elliott, but only one aspect (second dimension) of the discipline will be useful to the task at hand.[124] Elliott explains the two foci of social-scientific criticism thus,

> One focus of research with a social-scientific orientation has been the social and cultural conditions, features, and contours of early Christianity and its social environment. In this case, the social sciences are used to construct theories and models for collecting and analyzing data that illuminate salient features of ancient Mediterranean and early Christian society and culture...A second dimension of social-scientific criticism is specifically exegetical in nature and directs primary attention to the interpretation of biblical texts. Here social scientific criticism supplements the other methods of critical interpretation with the aim of elucidating the structure, content, strategy and intended rhetorical effect of the text within its social context. The text is analyzed as a vehicle of communication whose genre, structure, content, themes, message and aim are shaped by the cultural and social forces of the social system and the specific historical setting in which it is produced and to which it constitutes a specific response.[125]

I will employ the second dimension of social scientific criticism, as expressed here, for analytical purposes.[126] Specifically, the theory of social or group identity formation will be appropriated as an interpretative framework and to shed light on how the rhetoric,

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[124]See Philip F. Esler, "Review of D.G. Horrell – The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence," *JTS* 49 (1998): 253-260; "Models in NT Interpretation: A Reply to Horrell," *JSNT* 78 (2000): 107-113 and David G. Horrell, "Models and Methods in Social-Scientific Interpretation: A Response to Philip Esler," *JSNT* 78 (2000): 83-105. Esler and Horrell's debate dwells on the use of social scientific criticism in NT interpretation, either as a model or theoretical framework. Horrell makes a strong case about the need to avoid the use of models as the starting point in interpretation. I will refrain from the use of any particular model (e.g. sect) to reconstruct the social context or issues in the letter since I do not think an NT text should be made to fit or accommodate such models.

[125]John Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism of the NT* (London: SPCK, 1995), 32-33.

[126]Also T Schmeller, "Sociology and NT Studies," in *Methods of Biblical Interpretation* (foreword by Douglas A. Knight; Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 289-296. Schmeller provides more discussion on how the two aspects developed and their usefulness to exegetical study.

motivations and theological rationale of the moral discourse seems to promote a new identity that necessitates a certain mode of conduct.

I am well aware of the dangers in using social scientific theory as an interpretative framework as there is a potentiality to (a) impose a 'modern concept' on an ancient text - anachronism, (b) find in a text what an author may not have considered at all, or (c) assume that an ancient author shared my current concerns. I could not agree with Balch more when he cautions that,

> Sociological theory should be suggestive rather than generative. It should be suggesting questions and possibilities, not determine what we do or do not see in our texts. Sociological theory should not generate early Christian movements and relationships that never existed in history, which is the result when theory is utilized too rigidly. Second, theory should be employed 'piecemeal, as needed, where it fits.' Neither one theorist nor even one basic orientation, for example, either functionalist or conflict analysis, will answer all our questions... A third caution: sociological theory will help us be more objective and not 'disinterested.'[127]

It is noteworthy that though the English word 'identity' appeared only in the sixteenth century[128] and the concept of 'social identity' in the mid-twentieth century, what it entails as a social construct was in existence prior to and during the NT era. Jews, Greeks and Romans employed the rhetorical and social strategy that has been formulated into a theoretical process of identity formation[129] and it is therefore not inappropriate to use such a theory to investigate the social strategy of an NT text (Ephesians).[130] D. K.

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[127]Balch, "Hellenization/Acculturation in 1 Peter," 79-80.

[128]Judith Lieu, *Neither Jew Nor Greek – Constructing Early Christianity* (SNTW; London: T&T Clark, 2002), 191.

[129]See Judith Lieu, "Impregnable Ramparts and Walls of Iron:' Boundary and Identity in Early 'Judaism' and 'Christianity,'" *NTS* 48 (2002): 297-313. Lieu's article provides a survey of some ancient texts to demonstrate how Jews, Christians and even Greeks and Romans engaged in textual construction of social identity. Also Philip F. Esler, "Social Identity, the Virtues, and the Good Life: A New Approach to Romans 12.1-15.13," *BTB* 33.2 2003): 53-55.

[130]Philip F. Esler, "Models in NT Interpretation: A Reply to Horrell," *JSNT* 78 (2000): 107-113. Esler demonstrates how social scientific methods could be used to elucidate a NT passage, which in his article is Gal. 2.1-14.

Buell[131] has shown that it was not unusual for various religious and social groups to employ the 'rhetoric of identity' in their self-definition in the ancient world. She also provides substantial evidence to the effect that the early church employed such social mechanisms. Buell reckons that,

> They defined Christianness in various ways as membership in a new people, marked especially by its religious practices and beliefs. The principle of ethnic mutability allowed Christians to relativize the significance of the ethnic and racial identities of their converts, by arguing that conversion entailed the transformation of one's race...By conceptualizing race as both mutable yet 'real,' early Christians could define Christianness both as a distinct category in contrast to other peoples (including Jews, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, etc.) and also as inclusive since it is formed out of individuals from a range of different races.[132]

Judith Lieu[133] has recently demonstrated how texts shaped the identity and values of the early Christians. Lieu provides evidence to show how texts were instrumental in shaping the identity of people groups as far back as the second century BCE and in the wider Greco-Roman world. She further indicates that the manner in which Christian identity was constructed through text was not significantly different from that of their Roman, Greek or Jewish counterparts.[134] Thus, the rationale and rhetoric for positive identity formation among a group of people was new neither to ancient moralists nor to the early church. It is likely, as I will show later, that the rhetoric and rationale of the paraenesis of Ephesians may be adequately explained by using this theory to shed light on the interpretation of the text. The rhetoric of differentiation in Ephesians 4.17-5.21, in particular, may be understood as part of a strategy to highlight the distinctive identity of the readership as the basis for suitable praxis.

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[131]Denise Kimber Buell, "Rethinking the Relevance of Race for Early Christian Self-Definition," *HTR* 94.4 (2001): 449-476; "Race and Universalism in Early Christianity," *JECS* 10.4 (2002): 429-468; "Ethnicity and Religion in Mediterranean Antiquity and Beyond," *RSR* 26.3 (2000): 243-249.

[132]Buell, "Rethinking the Relevance of Race for Early Christian Self-Definition,," 473.

[133]Judith M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), 27-61.

[134]Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World,* 308-309.

Moral instruction that is rooted in or designed to inculcate group distinctiveness often transcends a mere prescription of dos and don'ts to encompass a wider range of social norms that are essential for the group's existence.[135] In other words, the *norms* of a society that has well defined identity goes beyond the range of ethics as a list of virtues and vices or a criterion for good and bad behaviour. As Esler explains,

> [Norms] help to regulate social existence by coordinating the attitudes and activities of the membership. Without norms to serve this purpose, the group might not be able to exist and operate as a social unit at all. Secondly, norms assist the group to achieve its goals. There is no purpose in a group having a particular vision of reality if that vision is not installed in the hearts and minds of the members through their acceptance of norms aimed at bringing it about. These functions might be summarized by saying that norms maintain and enhance group identity.[136]

The ethos of such a group is therefore geared towards a sense of obligation to relationship with members and group values. Moral standards are then tied up with that which promotes or corresponds to group vision, values, social boundaries, beliefs and the understanding of their place in the cosmos. In a recent study of ethics in the undisputed Pauline letters, David Horrell[137] has underlined the significance of social identity theory as a theoretical framework in our understanding of Paul's identity construction and his use of shared ethical values to promote solidarity in his readership. He carefully sets a wider framework for this theory and applies it to some aspects of ethics in the undisputed Pauline ethics. Horrell underscores that social identity theory is useful to the study of nature and values of the early church since their membership was

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[135]See David G. Horrell, "Social Sciences Studying Formative Christian Phenomena: A Creative Movement," in *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches* (Eds. Anthony J. Blasi et al.; Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2002), 23.

[136]Esler, "Social Identity, the Virtues," 55.

[137]David G. Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul's Ethics* (London: T&T Clark, 2005).

not based on ethnicity or nationality but on belonging to a group, namely the church.[138] I have found Horrell's work useful[139] and will interact with him and others in the course of the analysis. I will proceed to show the main features of social identity theory that will be employed in this work in the attempt to clarify the nature of the insider-outsider differentiation in the paraenesis of Ephesians.

The theory of 'social identity formation' originated from Henri Tajfel who sought to develop or identify key features that come to bear in the process of group or social identity development. Tajfel defines the concept in simple terms as,

> that *part* of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership...social identity as defined here is thus best considered as a shorthand term used to describe (1) limited aspects of the concept of self which are (2) relevant to certain limited aspects of social behaviour.[140]

Jenkins reiterates that the impact of collective social identity formation is crucial to the individual's self-understanding and character.[141] Social identity is often developed around ethnicity, language, kinship, nationality, religion, sex or race in a larger or dominant social context where a variety of factors may have led members to pose questions about what they stand for and who they are in relation to others in the society. It does not develop in isolation but almost always within a larger social context from which ingroup members find reasons to differentiate themselves. As Giles states, "social identity acquires meaning, however, mainly in social comparison with other

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[138]Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 138. See also Philip F. Esler, *Galatians* (London: Routledge, 1998), 141-177.

[139]I discovered Horrell's book in September 2005 when I had already completed a draft of my thesis using social identity theory and arguing along the same lines. However, Horrell's fourth chapter, in particular, has been helpful in strengthening some part of my discussion on 'rhetoric of differentiation' in the paraenesis of Ephesians (see below). In some cases, my independent analyses overlap with Horrell's conclusions, though his work is on the undisputed Pauline letters.

[140]H. Tajfel, "Social Categorization, Social Identity and Social Comparison," in *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies of the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (ed. Henri Tajfel; London: Academic Press, 1978), 63.

[141]Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London: Routledge, 1992), 19-28.

groups. We perceive and act in such a manner as to make our own group favourably distinct from other groups with which we may compare it."[142] Tajfel emphasizes that, "the 'positive aspects of social identity' and the reinterpretation and engagement in social action only acquire meaning in relation to, or in comparison with, other groups."[143] Ultimately, this will clarify group distinctiveness, encourage a deep sense of belonging, cherish group values and vigorously guard against external forces that may threaten its existence.

The process has cognitive, emotional and evaluative dimensions which help to establish the ethos and boundaries for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for ingroup members. First, psychologically, members are encouraged to develop a mindset that leaves a cognitive imprint in their sense of distinctiveness vis-à-vis outgroupers. This is also supposed to inform their judgment or moral conscience in the way they perceive, understand or deal with them. Lindesmith and Strauss have underlined the significance of self-understanding in how people develop their identity, values and relations with those they consider to be outsiders, even among children.[144] For example, "black skin is not, outside specific social contexts, either inferior or superior attribute; but it may become one, given certain social psychological conditions."[145] Jenkins explains the import of this ideological framework,

> Social identity is a game of playing vis-à-vis. Social identity is our understanding of who we are and who other people are, and reciprocally, other people's understanding of themselves and of others (which includes us). Social identity is, therefore, no more

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[142]H. Giles, "Linguistic Differentiation in Ethnic Groups," in *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies of the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (ed. Henri Tajfel; London: Academic Press, 1978), 385.

[143]Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 256.

[144]Alfred R. Lindesmith and Anselm L. Strauss, *Social Psychology – Third Edition* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 242-243.

[145]Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories,* 277.

> essential than meaning; it too is the product of agreement and disagreement, it too is negotiable.[146]

Second, the emotional dimension brings various practices/rituals, imagery or concepts to enhance emotional ties in group dynamics and seeks to foster a deep sense of belonging. Meeks[147] has demonstrated that the Pauline letters used what he calls the 'language of belonging' to generate a special feeling of group identity. Meeks asserts that Paul uses expressions like 'saints,' kinship lexemes (family, brothers, children of God), the elect, and the notion of the 'body of Christ' "to speak of the Christians as a very special group and of relations between them in terms charged with emotions."[148] In religious circles, certain rituals may be employed to foster a strong sense of warmth and fellowship among group members. It is well attested that rituals, such as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, fostered solidarity and underpinned group distinctiveness in the early church.[149] Third, the evaluative dimension deals with how ingroup members rate their status and conduct vis-à-vis outgroupers. In this process, ingroupers engage in self-definition and self-categorization of their essence, ethos, values and dynamics of relationships vis-à-vis outgroupers and thereby accentuate the "similarities between self and other ingroupers and differences between self and outgroupers."[150] For example, an ancient Jewish lad may have said as part of his morning prayers, "blessed be He (God) that He did not make me a Gentile; blessed be He that He did not make me a boor (i.e. an ignorant

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[146]Jenkins, *Social Identity*, 5. Also J.A. Boon, *Other Tribes, Other Scribes: Symbolic Anthropology in the Comparative Study of Cultures, Histories, Religions and Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 26.

[147]Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 85-95.

[148]Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 85.

[149]Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 102-110.

[150]Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 21.

peasant or a slave); blessed be He that He did not make me a woman."[151] A similar tradition among Greeks stated, "I was born a human being and not a beast, next, a man and not a woman, thirdly a Greek and not a barbarian."[152] These self-descriptions were meant to accentuate masculinity and boost their self-esteem in those patriarchal cultures, but this does not suggest that men had little or no contact with their female counterparts. The identity boundaries are not impermeable despite the stiffness that a textual construction may suggest. "Boundaries are never static; they are dynamic, process rather than rules, permeable and places of negotiation, even when they appear, and indeed are rhetorically asserted, to be none of these."[153]

An evaluative process involves generalization and sometimes exaggeration where ingroupers and outgroupers are categorized into 'black and white boxes' with ingroupers assuming privileged and honourable stance. Hogg and Abrams reckon that, "this involves intergroup differentiation and discrimination, ingroup favouritism, perceptions of evaluative superiority of the ingroup over the outgroup, stereotypic perception of ingroup, outgroup, and self, conformity to group norms, effective preference for ingroup over outgroup, and so on."[154] For example, Jews would label all non-Jews as Gentiles in the same way that Greeks referred to all non-Greeks (including Jews) as Barbarians in derogatory terms in antiquity. However, there is a high degree of subjectivity in the process, since the depiction of outgroupers is not meant to be realistic or made known to them but mainly engineered by key ingroup members as a form of

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[151]S. Singer, *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth of Nations* (2nd ed; London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1962), 6-7. This is adapted from the standard morning prayer for Jewish males.

[152]This expression seems to have been known and used for centuries in Greek culture. It was attributed to Thales and Socrates in Diogenes Laertius' *Vit Phil* 1:33. See also Plutarch, *Mor* 46.1 and Lactantius' *Div Inst.* 3:19:17.

[153]Lieu, "Impregnable Ramparts," 302 and Lieu, *Neither Jew Nor Greek,* 204-205.

[154]Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 23.

'propaganda strategy' to make ideological demarcation between 'them' and 'us' in the attempt to promote self–esteem, internal cohesion, group values and group distinctiveness. Incidentally, outgroupers could be upset when they realized how the 'other' depicts or perceives them in derogatory terms. Lieu notes that, "although Greek and Roman writings took for granted their own antithesis, sometimes couched in vitriolic terms, against Barbarians or foreigners, when they encounter the same polemic 'from the other side' they denounce it as 'hostile loathing against everyone else.'"[155] To summarize in the words of Esler, "social identity includes a cognitive dimension (a sheer sense of belonging to a group like this), an emotional dimension (how it feels to belong) and an evaluative dimension (how members rate themselves in relation to other group)."[156]

This theory will form part of the interpretative framework to supplement other exegetical approaches in chapters 2, 3 and 4, especially as it relates to the rhetoric of differentiation in the letter. In the fifth chapter, I will revisit the three main dimensions of the theory (cognitive/psychological, emotional and evaluative) in my attempt to provide 'social-scientific explanation' to Ephesians' rhetoric of differentiation and its use of shared ethical values.

1.3 PRELIMINARY ISSUES RELATING TO EPHESIANS

This section will provide some suppositions that will be made in the analysis regarding authorship, destination of the letter and the effect of the debate on the relationship between Colossians and Ephesians on this study. I will also indicate the scope of analysis in this work.

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[155]Lieu, "Impregnable Ramparts," 305.
[156]Esler, "Social Identity, the Virtues," 54.

1.3.1 AUTHORSHIP

The issue of authorship of Ephesians is an ongoing debate in modern scholarship. There are two main views in this debate: (a) Paul is the author of Ephesians and (b) Ephesians was written by a disciple of Paul, before or after his death. While the debate still remains inconclusive, I will refer to the author of Ephesians tentatively as 'Paul' or 'the author' – this will be a reference to the Paul whose name is embedded in the text, which could be either the Apostle Paul or pseudonymous Paul.[157] Moreover, Ephesians has been interpreted within the Pauline tradition and will be approached in this work as such. The question of authorship does not have direct bearing on this study, since it focuses on the text as it stands in the NT and the interpretation thereof. Lincoln and Hoehner have given strong arguments for either side of the debate, and I find their discussion useful for further reading on the authorship of the letter.[158]

1.3.2 DESTINATION

The lack of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in the prescript of some manuscripts,[159] and other factors, have led to an ongoing debate about the recipients of Ephesians.[160] It has been argued that the

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[157]See Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 2-61. Hoehner has recently made a strong case for Pauline authorship but the issue remains open.

[158]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, lix-lxxiii.

[159]See Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 626-630. There are old and reliable manuscripts that omit ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in the first verse of the letter including Chester Beaty Papyrus II (P46 *ca. 200*), Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus (ℵ, B. *ca. 4th century*) which are the oldest uncial manuscripts, 424c and the minuscule 1739. However, the phrase appears in most manuscripts (uncial and cursive) and a large number of the Fathers used texts that contained the words. The entire Western tradition (some of which are 2nd century MSS), Byzantine tradition and some important Alexandrian witnesses (including the famous Alexandrinus) stand behind a text that is addressed to Ephesus. However, Basil, Jerome (4th century) and probably Origen (3rd century) did not use a text that contained the phrase, though the exact text they used is unknown to us.

[160]See Ernest Best, "Recipients and the Title of the Letter to the Ephesians: Why and When the Designation 'Ephesians,' *ANRW* 2.25.4 (1987), 3247-3279, D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo and Leon Morris. *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 311 and Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1968), 509-514. Also
Wilhelm Egger, *How to Read the New Testament: An Introduction to Linguistic and Historical Critical*

letter was addressed either to Hierapolis,[161] Laodicea[162] or Ephesus.[163] However, while a specific destination remains inconclusive, all suggestions point to a location in Asia Minor.[164] The wider Asia Minor readership is substantiated by the fact that "the earliest evidence of the knowledge of the letter is found in Ignatius and Polycarp; the latter was Bishop of Smyrna in Asia Minor and Ignatius passed through the area on his way to Rome."[165] Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian referred to it as the letter to the Ephesians.[166] Moreover, when Marcion tampered with the prescript of the manuscript he still ascribed the letter to Laodicean readership. Tychicus, the only individual the author mentions in the letter is also associated with Asia Minor elsewhere in the NT (cf. Col 4.7-8; Acts 20.4; 2 Tim 4.12). Muddiman has shown 'remarkable similarities' with other NT letters addressed to Asia Minor as evidence in support of an Asia Minor destination.[167] The general scope of the letter and the fact that the cities associated with its readership were all located in Asia Minor leaves us with the probability that perhaps an encyclical letter (Ephesians) may have been delivered in one of the cities in Asia Minor[168] to be circulated among churches in the region. I will therefore assume this wider context, subject to later findings.

Methodology (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 44 - 45.

[161]Larry Kreitzer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Peterborough: Epworth, 1997).

[162]George H. van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline School – Colossians and Ephesians in the Context of Graeco-Roman Cosmology, with a New Synopsis of the Greek Texts* (WUNT 2.171; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 197-201, 213.

[163]See David A. Black, "The Peculiarities of Ephesians and the Ephesians Address," *GTJ* 2.1 (1981): 67 and Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 78-89.

[164]See Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 36-41 and MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 17-18.

[165]Best. *Ephesians*, 4.

[166]Guthrie. *New Testament Introduction*, 509.

[167]Muddiman. *Ephesians*, 36-41

[168]Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet* (SNTMS 43; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), Lincoln is emphatic on an Asia Minor destination and establishes the readership specifically in the Lycus Valley.

It is now a consensus view that the ethnic composition was a Gentile majority with probably some Hellenistic Jews in the churches.[169] Until fairly recent years, scholars were divided about the ethnic composition of the addressees – whether they formed a Gentile majority or a Jewish majority. There was no question about the fact that they constituted a mixture of some sort of Gentiles and Jews – the debate was rather on the ratio or proportions. The internal evidence, however, seem to support a predominant Gentile readership (2.11; 3.1). Elsewhere, the direct address to the 'uncircumcised,' 'fellow heirs with the Jews,' 'aliens from Israel' and a people 'without God' point to a mainly Gentile readership (2.11-13; 3.1-6).

1.3.3 EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS

Modern scholarship on Ephesians has taken a keen interest in its relationship with Colossians. Some claim that Ephesians is dependent on Colossians,[170] a position that has affected the treatment of Ephesians as a letter on its own. First, I will not devote any attention to the debate on the relationship between Ephesians and Colossians in this

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[169]*Contra* Rick Strelan. *Paul, Artemis, and the Jews in Ephesus* (Berlin/New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1996), 19, 163-167. Strelan has argued that the churches in Asia Minor were full of Jews since Paul did not have success among Gentiles in his ministry in Asia Minor. He questions parts of the Lukan account in Acts and reconstructs a scenario where Christianity could have been appealing only to diaspora Jews in the region. He argues that the influence of Artemis and other cults in the city did not see any demise with the advent of Christianity, and Gentiles would have been more interested in the worship of other gods than what Christianity was able to offer. For example, Artemis was the goddess of honor and prosperity of the city. "For the Ephesians, their Artemis was not merely a god whose cult happened to be at Ephesus. Their Artemis was'Εφεσια. Her name is"Αρτεμις 'Εφεσια (p. 46)." Sometimes she was portrayed as distinct from other Artemis known in the city or elsewhere. Her temple was a bank, an icon of Ephesus and served also as a place for asylum. She was known to have been a goddess of protection, one who brings prosperity and blessings to her devotees. She was acknowledged as the goddess of the virgins and one who aided young women. Festivities and worship in the Artemisia bound people together and made room for fun and celebration. "They provided opportunities for young women to meet their fiancés and young men their brides, all to the accompaniment of music and dancing" (p. 58). Strelan gives a good account of the influence of Artemis in Asia Minor, but I found his argument about ethnic composition of the early church quite unconvincing.

[170]van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline School*, 147-203. His whole analysis of Ephesians works from the premise that it is a 'reworking of Colossians (p. 203).' He further claims that the prescript of Ephesians has been drawn from 2 Corinthians (pp. 149-150).

work in order to avoid mere duplication of the conclusions drawn by various commentators.[171] However, I acknowledge that there are similarities between the two letters and the likelihood that Ephesians depended on, adapted some material from, or shared a common tradition with Colossians. Second, I will intentionally treat Ephesians as a letter on its own merit and not try to read it through the lenses of Colossians. I will therefore interact with Colossians like any other letter in the Pauline corpus, since the task at hand concerns primarily the literary piece of Ephesians and not external factors that may have contributed to its composition. It is not an illegitimate exercise to do comparative analysis to explore common features in Colossians and Ephesians. However, we must not assume that it was imperative for the readers of Ephesians to read Colossians as a prerequisite to the understanding of its message.[172] This is like saying that the readers of Matthew or Luke have to know Mark in order to grasp the message they convey or interpreters could understand Matthew and Luke only if they read it through the lenses of Mark.

1.3.4 THE SCOPE OF ANALYSIS

Modern scholarship has widely accepted the notion that Ephesians, like other letters in the Pauline corpus, is divided into two main parts, namely theology (doctrinal) and ethics/paraenesis[173] (cf. Rom 12.1; 1 Thess 4.1; Gal 5.1; Col 3.1).[174] It is for this reason

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[171]See Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 2-47. I have found the discussion here very good and helpful.

[172]Source or form critical concerns about the composition of Ephesians are not significant to the study at hand. The analyses are based on the literary piece called Ephesians, as we have it in the critical text.

[173]The word 'paraenesis' is used interchangeably with the word 'ethics' to mean moral instruction or ethical discourse. When I refer to the paraenesis of Ephesians I therefore mean the ethical teaching of the letter.

[174]See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, xxxvi. See also Rudolf Bultmann, "The Problem of Ethics in Paul (1924)' in *Understanding Paul's Ethics: Twentieth Century Approaches* (ed. Brian Rosner; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), Martin Dibelius, *A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian*

that a discussion on the paraenesis of Ephesians will normally presume to be dwelling on chapters 4-6. However, the bulk of our investigation into the apparent tension between 'differentiation' and 'integration' will focus principally on 4.17–6.9 for two reasons. First, the use of contrastive patterns or binary opposition begins in 4.17 and continues the pattern consistently until 5.21 (or 6.9, as I will explain later). The *Haustafel*, which allegedly appropriates conventional structures to integrate the church into the wider society, also begins at 5.21 and ends at 6.9. Lincoln[175] has argued quite persuasively that 6.10-20 is a *peroratio* (this is a term used for a conclusion that summarizes the main issues in a manner that evokes emotive and immediate response)[176] and if we accept his conclusion then the rest of the letter, 6.21-24, should be seen as the final conclusion. This implies that Ephesians 4.17-6.9 constitutes the main paraenetic discourse with 6.10-20 functioning as recapitulation of its overall message. Second, the notion that chapters 1-3 is the doctrinal part and chapters 4-6 is the ethical section may not stand critical scrutiny. For instance, there is ethical material in 1.4-5 and 2.1-3, 10 and some doctrinal material in 4.4-16 and 5.21-33.

Literature (Hertford: Nicholson and Watson, 1936), 143-144, 217 – 220, and Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians* (HC; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 292 and Willi Marxsen, *New Testament Foundations for Christian Ethics* (trans. O.C. Dean; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993). This division, otherwise referred to as the *indicative* and the *imperative* was based on Marxsen's discussion on the relationship between theology and ethics in Paul in response to Bultmann, who had argued that the notion that the *imperative* in Paul requires strict observance and compliance undermined the essence of God's grace often expressed in the Pauline *indicative*. For Marxsen, theology in Paul is an experience with God that shapes one's perception and walk with him. Therefore concrete action must be grounded and directed towards an experience with Christ hence the inseparable character of the 'indicative' and the 'imperative.' Thus, "an imperative is necessary wherever people do not see that an indicative always contains an imperative. If we urge the following of an imperative, we have to do this in a way that makes people recognize and experience the prior indicative" (Marxsen, 213). Subsequently, scholars accepted the view and began to use the terms *indicative* and *imperative* to refer to the doctrinal and ethical sections of Pauline corpus. The *imperative*, which is the ethical instruction, is also referred to as paraenesis. Ephesians is understood to have natural divisions of the *indicative* (chapters 1-3) and the *imperative* or paraenesis (chapters 4-6).

[175]Andrew T. Lincoln, "Stand Therefore...':Ephesians 6:10-20 as *Peroratio*," *BibInt* 3 (1995): 99-114.

[176]See O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 459.

It is self-evident that 4.1-3 is a transitional statement that could reasonably be seen as a nexus between theology (indicative) and ethics (imperative) in the letter.[177] The author sets the agenda for his ethical instruction at the beginning of chapter 4 by drawing a clear transition from more doctrinal instruction (chap. 1-3) and announcing what could be deemed the thesis statement of his paraenetic discourse (4.1-3).[178] He urges his readers to conduct themselves in a manner that is worthy of their 'calling' in gentleness, patience and forbearance so as to foster 'unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' Two features in this statement need to be noted: first, the use of the terms κλῆσις and καλέω (4.1,4) as a form of *terminus technicus* that the author would later unpack and second, the notion that praxis ought to enhance intra-church solidarity. Ephesians 4.4-16 further explains the significance of these two features and how they relate to the goal and scope of ethics before resuming the ethical instruction in 4.17. The 'calling' (κλῆσις) to which they have been called (καλέω) is explained in terms of a call to common identity and theological framework: ἓν σῶμα, ἓν πνεῦμα, μιᾷ ἐλπίδι, εἷς κύριος, μία πίστις, ἓν βάπτισμα and to εἷς θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ πάντων (4.4-6). However, this does not obliterate or undermine individuality. Christ, who has triumphed over all in the cosmos, has given diverse grace-gifts to each member to (a) equip the saints (πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων), (b) to the work of ministry/service (εἰς ἔργον διακονίας) and (c) to edify or build up the body of Christ (εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ

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[177]Cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 652. Wallace argues that the content of 4:1-3 highlights the main themes in the letter and so could be considered as a summary of all that the letter is about. It is however possible to conceive of a literary piece that provides its thesis statement as part of a transitional sentence. I opine that it is better to view it as the nexus between the doctrine and ethical sections of the letter, drawing inferences from the previous discussion and the ethical demands.

[178]Cf. Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians* (Leicester: IVP, 1989), 116.

[4.12]).[179] In other words, each individual believer has been enabled with something to contribute to the 'body of Christ' "until we all attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, to mature or perfect manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (4.13). The author indicates that these services will enable members to be resilient against any form of false doctrine, craftiness or deceptive schemes that are not compatible with their status in Christ. They are entreated 'to speak the truth in love' as they seek to grow in Christ, the head. It is in Christ and through him that the church grows and strengthens in love (4.15-16). Christ is not only the giver of gifts for the works of service but it is also in him that the church functions. Thus, the identity of the church is shaped by Christology, hence the 'body of Christ.' It is from this scope and context that the author introduces the lengthy paraenetic discourse with a transitory phrase, τοῦτο οὖν (4.17), calling for suitable praxis to promote internal cohesion in this new community. It is therefore appropriate to refer to a discussion that centres primarily on 4.17-6.9 as the most concentrated or sustaining ethical discourse in the letter.

1. 4 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The next three chapters will focus on the analysis of 4.17-6.9 followed by a fifth chapter providing theological and social-scientific explanation for the author's rhetoric of

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[179]See H.P. Hamann "The Translation of Ephesians 4.12 – A Necessary Revision," *ConJ* 14 (1988): 42-49; T.D. Gordon, "'Equipping' Ministry in Ephesians 4?" *JETS* 37 (1994): 69-78; J.J. Davis, "Ephesians 4.12 Once More: 'Equipping the Saints for the Work of Ministry,'" *ERT* 24(2000): 167-176; J.C. O'Neill, "'The Work of Ministry' in Ephesians 4.12 and the NT," *ExpTim* 112 (2001): 336-340 and Sydney H.T. Page, "Whose Ministry? A Re-Appraisal of Ephesians 4.12," *NovT* XLVII.1 (2005): 26-46. The purpose of the gifts is a debated matter. One group of scholars argue that they are meant only to equip the believers for ministry, whereas others argue that they express three reasons for which the gifts are given. I have found Page's recent argument to be quite persuasive. Thus, contrary to the view that it is only intended to equip the saints for ministry (with subordinate clauses explaining how this will happen), 4.12 rather expresses three reasons for which the gifts have been given to individuals.

differentiation and his use of ethical values that are shared by other Greco-Roman moralists. The final chapter (chapter 6) will be a summary of conclusions drawn from the discussion and outline of some issues emerging from this study that may be explored further. The next chapter (chapter 2) is the first of three that are devoted to analysis of the text in 4.17-6.9. Here, I examine the author's rhetoric of differentiation (old-new, light-darkness, wisdom-folly contrasts) to establish the nature of differentiation being encouraged. The third chapter further discusses his use of virtues and vices, especially in 4.25-5.5, as a strategy for differentiation or an attempt to set moral boundaries for his readership. Here, a comparative analysis will be made between the virtues and vices in Ephesians and that of contemporary Greco-Roman moralists to see if Ephesians promotes values that are counter-cultural to the ideals of the wider society. In the fourth chapter, I will scrutinize the validity of the prevailing view that the household code is an integrative mechanism. I will critique its premises and examine Ephesians 5.21-6.9 in the light of other instructions on household relations in antiquity in order to expose some weaknesses in the current view. I will also examine the fictive kinship language to shed light on how the author portrays household relations in the letter before making an alternative proposal to the apologetic reading. The fifth chapter will provide a theological and social-scientific explanation to differentiation and shared ethical values in the paraenetic discourse. The question of whether the tension emerges from the nature of the letter or misinterpretation of the text will then be clarified. The final chapter will then end the discussion with a summary of the conclusions drawn.

I now proceed to examine the text in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

THE RHETORIC OF DIFFERENTIATION

This section examines the rhetoric of differentiation in the social strategy of the author in 4.17-5.21. The general view is that a sharp distinction of some sort is being drawn between the addressees and the outsiders. This has been explained as a contrast of the conduct (behavioural patterns) of outsiders and insiders or call for social withdrawal from the outside world. The discussion on 4.17-5.21 will be divided into two main parts: the first part (this chapter) will focus first on 4.17-21 as it relates to the rest of the paraenesis. This will be followed by analysis of the old-new (4.22-24), darkness-light (5.6-14) and unwise-wise (5.15-21) antitheses in their textual units. The second part (chapter 3) will pay particular attention to the virtue-vice antithesis in 4.25-5.5 and elsewhere in the letter as it relates to the question of differentiation. The rationale for this division is to give adequate attention to why and how the author uses antitheses (e.g. old-new) to differentiate insiders from outsiders as well as to his use of virtue-vice antithetical device for a similar purpose.

This chapter will seek to answer some critical questions regarding the social strategy of the author: to what extent is the rhetoric aimed at encouraging or legitimating a social distinction or separation? Are these antitheses meant to be more of a rhetorical strategy than a realistic call for withdrawal from outsiders? What are the main features or markers of the distinction being drawn? Is he indeed calling for an introversionist stance, or what? Is the author consistent in his social strategy of the paraenesis? Answers to these questions will help us to clarify the nature of the differentiation being

espoused and eventually aid our overall analysis of the apparent tension between differentiation in 4.17-5.21 and integration in 5.21-6.9. The discussion here will be conducted in four segments: the first part will focus on the function of 4.17-21 as it relates to the insider and outsider contrast that permeates the paraenetic discourse. I will then examine the old-new, darkness-light, unwise-wise contrasts exegetically to determine their social outlook as they stand in their context in Ephesians, in that order. I will conduct a close textual analysis of the rhetoric and compare the rhetoric here and the actual ethical content (substance) with Greco-Roman moral traditions.

2.1 NO LONGER BEHAVING AS THE GENTILES – 4.17-21

The function of 4.17-21 is crucial to our understanding of the rhetoric of differentiation in 4.17-6.9. The long sentence in 4.17-19 (a) sets the tone for the comprehensive ethical discourse and (b) introduces the scope of subsequent antitheses. In 4.1-3, 'right' behaviour is grounded in their 'calling' and the need for unity or the bond of peace in the church. The nature of this 'calling' receives extensive treatment in chapters 1-3. God has called them to the hope of glorious inheritance for the saints (1.18). The common attributes they share in Christ are further outlined to underscore the nature of their calling, shared identity and the theological basis for their current status (4.4-6). Moreover, the exalted Christ is said to have given each member gifts so that they can make a meaningful contribution to the community (4.12-13).

Significant to the study of differentiation is the fact that 'the giving of gifts' was preceded by a cosmic intervention, where the ascended Christ defeated cosmic evil powers in order that he might fill the earth and empower individual believers for service

in the church.[1] The implication is that these individuals can now perform their duties under the lordship of Christ and not subject to the control of the powers (cf. 1.20-23 and 2.1-10). In other words, these are opposing forces in the world but the readers are now secure in Christ as they utilize their gifts (δόμα) to enhance corporate solidarity (4.8-16). It is with this immediate context that the author begins a comparatively lengthy part of his ethical discourse in 4.17 to promote appropriate conduct that will enhance unity in the church (4.3, 13).[2] Hoehner and Lincoln have argued that τοῦτο οὖν only resumes 4.1-3[3] whereas Best suggests that τοῦτο rather "points forward and not backward...and οὖν does not draw a conclusion from what precedes."[4] The attempt to link the sentence in 4.17-19 either to 4.1-3 or the admonition that follows fails to account for the theological statement in 4.4-16 and its bearing on the paraenesis. Structurally, there is a clear transition from a broader theological instruction (chapters 1-3) to ethical admonition in 4.1-3, which is elaborated in 4.4-16. A passionate appeal is therefore issued in 4.17 with τοῦτο οὖν as an inference from the previous statement to call for differentiation as a matter of urgency.

The author, who has reaffirmed his credibility in the Lord, calls for radical departure from the manner of life associated with τὰ ἔθνη (4.17). Thus, among the readership of Gentile majority in Asia Minor, it is no longer (μηκέτι) acceptable to exhibit the conduct of τὰ ἔθνη. Conversely, it is imperative to dissociate from the mindset and morality of τὰ ἔθνη since they are incompatible with their new status in

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[1]See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 242, Best, *Ephesians*, 378-382 and Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 524-530. The phrase ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις in 4.8 is generally understood to denote the defeat of and victory over the powers.

[2]The import is to promote internal cohesion and this is referred to as τὴν ἑνότητα τοῦ πνεύματος (4.3) and τὴν ἑνότητα τῆς πίστεως in 4.13.

[3]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 582 and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 276.

[4]Best, *Ephesians*, 416.

Christ. But who are τὰ ἔθνη? The term normally denotes Gentiles as opposed to Jews, but here it seems to take a new meaning as part of the rhetorical strategy to accentuate the difference between insiders and outsiders.[5] Instead of a Jewish stereotype of all non-Jews as Gentiles (Wis. 3.8; 5.14-16; 10.4-7; Lev 18; Joel 3), here the term appears to label all unbelievers as Gentiles. Elsewhere, Ephesians employs the Jewish stereotypical rhetoric (τὰ ἔθνη) to refer to non-Jews as Gentiles (3.1, 6, 8). The pre-conversion past of the Gentile believers had been portrayed as the uncircumcised, those who were alienated from Israel, strangers to the covenant, hopeless, a people without God and those who were far off (μακράν). In Ephesians, those boundaries have been broken down among believers through Christ (2.14-15). Τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί (2.11) have now been reconciled with Jews to constitute one body in Christ (2.15). As such, all unbelievers are branded as οἱ λοιποί (2.11) and τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας (2.2; 5.6). So, what does it mean for these believers to abandon the Gentile way of life? Does it imply that Jewish believers dissociate from their fellow ingroup members who are Gentiles? More so, is the author condemning Gentiles as individuals or Gentile behaviour? What would be the implication for the predominantly Gentile readership?

The author indicates the need to differentiate from τὰ ἔθνη as being urgent, imminent and nonnegotiable, but he does not explain how Gentile believers are supposed to dissociate from τὰ ἔθνη. However, it is self-evident that the readers are being urged to perceive τὰ ἔθνη as outsiders whose conduct is incompatible with who they, the readers, have become in Christ. The main issue in modern scholarship is not whether τὰ ἔθνη refers to unbelieving outsiders but whether it specifically refers to

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[5]*Contra* Dahl, *Studies in Ephesians*, 441. Dahl has argued that all references to Gentiles in Ephesians refer specifically to non-Jews but I will argue that the use of τὰ ἔθνη here is an exception.

pagan (unbelieving Gentiles)[6] or all outsiders[7] that may also include unbelieving Jews. Best argues that the appropriate rendering should be 'pagan' since the main import of 4.17 is to show "the non-Jewish nature of the culture from which the readers have been converted. AE (author of Ephesians) now briefly describes that culture; the sins with which he categorizes are largely the same as those Jews used of Gentile culture."[8] This implies that τὰ ἔθνη retains the force of non-Jew, but this particular usage refers to those who are not part of the church. Kreitzer argues that this is a strategy to distinguish believers from unbelievers. He explains that it is a depiction of "the new Humanity in Christ as transcending the earlier categories of Jews and Gentiles; here in 4.17-23 life in Christ is being contrasted with life outside Christ."[9] For Lincoln, "this underscores the 'third race' mentality of this writer, which emerged from 2.11-22 where the church was depicted as a new creation, as one new person replacing the two old ethnic entities of Israel and the Gentiles."[10] But if this also underlines the readers' new identity in Christ, then is it being suggested that Gentile believers could now perceive Jewish unbelievers as outsiders?

The fact that τὰ ἔθνη refers to outsiders is quite evident, but we are in the field of conjecture as to whether this includes Jewish unbelievers since nothing is stated to that effect. The main focus lies on what the believers need to know about their new identity in Christ and its commensurate behaviour. This has no particular relevance for an

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[6]Ernest Best, *Ephesians – A Shorter commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 213.

[7]Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 196, Barth, *Ephesians*, 499, Perkins, *Ephesians*, 106, O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 319 and John A. Allan, *The Epistle to the Ephesians – The Body of Christ* (London: SCM, 1959), 115.

[8]Best, *Ephesians – A Shorter commentary*, 213. Best supports this statement with references from Wis 12-15; 18.10-19; *Ep Arist* 132-8, 140, 277; *Sib Or* 3.8-45, 220-35; *Jub* 22.16-18; *T Naph* 3.3. Cf. Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 212.

[9]Kreitzer, *Ephesians*, 136.

[10]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 276.

outsider and neither is the instruction meant to be available to outsiders who are depicted in those terms in Ephesians. As MacDonald rightly puts it, τὰ ἔθνη here should be seen "as a label for all those who are outside the church."[11] A significant nuance of this rhetoric is the fact that Gentile believers should no longer perceive themselves as outsiders; hence some manuscripts insert λοιπα before τὰ ἔθνη in 4.17 to indicate that the addressees are being depicted in unison to dissociate from 'other Gentiles' (ℵ^{c} D^{b,c} K L P Ψ arm *al.*).[12] Thus, Gentile converts are no longer seen in light of their past but as belonging to the people of God – part of 'us' as opposed to 'them.' Their new identity removes the stigma and uncleanness that Jews attribute to Gentiles as far as members of the church are concerned. The term τὰ ἔθνη is likely to evoke an emotive response among the Gentile believers regarding their sense of belonging. The caution is therefore directed towards Jewish and Gentile believers who need to make a decisive break from the manner of life associated with non-believers.[13] Subsequently, all unbelievers will be stereotyped as we find here in order to distinguish their life and conduct from insiders.

Furthermore, the question of whether τὰ ἔθνη refers to the non-Jewish ethnic or people group or to the lifestyle (ethics) associated with outsiders needs to be addressed. It is noteworthy that, at least here, the author does not demand physical or social withdrawal from outsiders but employs the sharp rhetoric to prompt a change of conduct (μηκέτι ὑμᾶς **περιπατεῖν**, καθὼς καὶ τὰ ἔθνη **περιπατεῖ**) and more specifically from the

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[11]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 302.

[12]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 582 and Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 499. The Textus Receptus reads with λοιπα as τα λοιπα ἔθνη (other Gentiles or the rest of the Gentiles) as well. However, more reliable manuscripts omit λοιπα (P^{46} ℵ* A B D* F G 082 33 88 255 256 263 296 424^{c} 467 1319 et al.) and Metzger explains that the appearance of λοιπα in some manuscripts is 'an interpretative intrusion' to clarify the nuance (Bruce M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek NT* [London: United Bible Society, 1971], 605). Thus, τὰ ἔθνη refers to Gentiles outside the church apart from those inside the church.

[13]Cf. John A. Allan, *The Epistle to the Ephesians – The Body of Christ* (London: SCM, 1959), 114-115.

corrupt thinking and behaviour of outsiders. The depiction of the outside world is general and conceptually formed and not a reference to concrete and tangible historical situations. The author indicates that the current condition of outgroupers[14] has come about as a result of deficient intellectual prowess and alienation from God (4. 17b–18a).[15] Their minds are incapacitated, futile or purposeless, and they are unable to discern good from evil since their διάνοια has been darkened. The attribution of moral failure to intellectual ineptitude was widespread, especially among Stoics (see discussion on wise-fool contrast below).[16] In Romans, Paul describes the mental state of Gentiles similarly in these terms (**ἐματαιώθησαν** ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ **ἐσκοτίσθη** ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία [1.21]). According to Ephesians, God had been made known to humanity through creation but they have refused to acknowledge him and have consequently become susceptible to intellectual ineptitude to their own detriment. Thus, Ephesians shares the Pauline notion that unbelievers have futile minds and darkened understanding (Rom 1.21-32). However, these are ideological labels or constructs that are not accessible to or verifiable by unbelievers.

The unnamed agent of the passive expression ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ ὄντες in 4.18 is also crucial to our understanding of the metaphysical dimension of the ongoing antithesis. Elsewhere in Ephesians τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος (2.2) influences bad behaviour while misdemeanour is also said to attract the negative influence of ὁ διάβολος (4.27). Ephesians 6.12 indicates that there are cosmic powers operating in the realm of darkness and these are also the forces that are currently at work among

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[14]The participle ὄντες indicates that it is a prevailing state of non-believers (cf. 2.2 where the state of the unbelievers is also depicted as a current reality).

[15]James A. Hyde, "Ephesians 4.17-24," *RevExp* 89 (1992):404.

[16]The link between intellectual activity and behaviour was common among moral philosophers and also expressed in the Latin maxim *vivere est cogitare* (to live is to think – Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* V.111).

unbelievers (2.1-3). There is also a parallel in 4.23 (also passive) where the renewing of the mind is generally understood to be the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the believers. It seems that the futile mindset has provided the gateway for diabolic influence, hence the agency of evil spiritual powers.[17] While God gives the spirit of wisdom, enlightens the eyes of their hearts (1.17-18) and renews the believers' minds (v. 23), diabolic powers are involved in 'darkening' the understanding of unbelievers. Thus, the readers ought to abandon the manner of life associated with unbelievers because they are corrupt intellectually, their ability to understand is obscured and they are susceptible to diabolic influence.

The pathetic state of τὰ ἔθνη is further expressed to underscore its undesirable character. They are alienated (4.18)[18] from true life that God gives. Previously, their condition had been characterized as death (cf. 5.14)[19] in 'trespasses and sins' and subject to diabolic influence (2.1-3).[20] Here, their alienation denies them the fullness of life as God accords his people (cf. 2.12). The verb that expresses their alienation (ἀπαλλοτριόομαι) is the same one that was used in 2.12 to describe Gentiles' alienation from the 'commonwealth of Israel' prior to their conversion. It is noteworthy that the perfect participles in 4.18 (ἐσκοτωμένοι and ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι) expressing the darkening of their understanding and alienation indicates a completed action with continuous effect. Thus, the three main features associated with τὰ ἔθνη are (a) their corrupt

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[17]See the discussion on the parallel statement in verse 23, where the verb is also in the passive mood.

[18]Cf. Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 213. He explains that 'alienation' in verse 18 should be understood as referring to all humanity, not as it is used in 2.12.

[19]John W.R. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians* (Leicester: IVP, 1979), 71. Stott thinks that the description of their spiritual state as death is a fact that stands true for those outside Christ even in our day.

[20]See John Eadie, *The Ephesians* (GNTC; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 119 and Ernest Best, "Dead in Trespasses and Sins (Eph. 2:1)," *JSNT* 13 (1981): 19.

mindset, (b) the darkening of their minds by the forces of evil and (c) separation from the life of God. As Dahl rightly puts it, this duality shows that "Gentiles (outsiders) side with death and darkness, and with the prince that holds sway over the sublunar sphere of the air, the devil (see esp. 4.17-19; also 2.3; 4.22; 5.3-6)."[21] This is to say that the differentiation here is between moral/intellectual ineptitude and aptitude or an inclusion versus exclusion with regard to τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ θεοῦ.

Furthermore, the author explains the means by which τὰ ἔθνη arrived at this situation in two phrases: διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν τὴν οὖσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς, διὰ τὴν πώρωσιν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν (4.18b). Their hard-heartedness[22] and ignorance have consequently affected their mental prowess (cf. Ps 14.1), invited diabolic influence on their understanding and robbed them of true life in God.[23] The combination of ignorance (ἄγνοια) and the condition of the heart (καρδία) in ethical instruction has parallels in Greek anthropology. For example, "in Stoicism the heart is in some sense the central organ of intellectual life, the seat of reason, from which feeling, willing and thinking

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[21]Dahl, *Studies in Ephesians*, 442.

[22]See Fisher of Lambeth, "Blind or Hard of Heart?" *Theology* 69 (1966): 25-26, Barnabas Lindars, "Blind or Hard of Heart?" *Theology* 69 (1966): 121, Colville of Culross, "Blind or Hard of Heart?" *Theology* 69 (1966):171, C.H. Dodd, "Blind or Hard of Heart?" *Theology* 69 (1966): 223-224 I am citing from Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 588 and J. Armitage Robinson, 'On πώρωσις and πήρωσις,' in *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: James Clarke & Co 2nd), 264-274. Πώρωσις could be translated as blindness, shortsightedness, stubbornness or hardness of heart especially when it is used with heart. The articles aforelisted debate the appropriate translation of the word in this context. Robinson explains that the word as it appears in 4.18 conveys the sense of moral blindness but could well be translated as 'hardness' not in the sense of stubbornness (not the process but the result). It is 'intellectual obtuseness, not stealing of the will (p. 266).' It is now widely understood to be conveying the sense of hardness of heart here in Ephesians.

[23]See H. C.G. Moule, *Ephesian Studies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900), 213-214. Also J.L. Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970), 316-317 and Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians* (London: IVP, 1974), 126. They have argued that this characterization of moral failure and intellectual ineptitude mark a true description of life in Greco-Roman societies. It is likely that the author of Ephesians is not doing historical reconstruction but providing prescriptive admonitions to harness internal cohesion among his readers, as our analysis may show.

proceed."[24] Ephesians reiterates both Greek and Jewish[25] conventions when it ascribes moral failure to ignorance or lack of ability to reason.[26] For Musonius Rufus, the way to avert such moral failure is to engage in philosophical learning. "One can mention no study except philosophy that develops self-control. Certainly, it teaches one to be above pleasure and greed, to admire thrift and to avoid extravagance; it trains one to have a sense of shame, and to control one's tongue, and it produces discipline, order and courtesy."[27] Here, the author of Ephesians uses his knowledge of the values, intellectual tradition and the moral philosophy of the day[28] to indict outsiders from a particular religious point of view. The appropriation of these conventions is part of the rhetoric to stereotype the outside world, from which the readers had been converted. The aim is to prompt radical change of perception and conduct. Thus, while much of the depiction of τὰ ἔθνη may have resonance with misconduct in some elements of society, it is clear that the author does not make it his ambition to make realistic social comparison or give a fair description of the outside world but to show the deplorable state of 'them' vis-à-vis 'us' in Christ as the basis for a new life.

The outsiders are depicted as having become callous/cold-hearted (ἀπαλγέω) and lost their sensibility (cf. 2.1). Ephesians depicts them as being responsible for their moral failure. However, Paul in Romans 1.24-32 argues that it is God who 'gave the

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[24]Behm, "καρδία," *TDNT* III.608-609.

[25]Cf. Josephus. *Ant.*X.142; Wis. Sol. 13.1,7-9; 14.22; *T. Gad* 5.7; Philo, *Decal* 8; *Leg.* I.15; *Fug.* 8; *Contempl.* 31. Philo explains that the elder who stands to speak to God during their time of contemplation must be a man of great learning. He who should have "the most profound learning in their doctrines, comes forward and speaks with steadfast look and steadfast voice, with great power of reasoning, and great prudence." Such a person is deemed a good leader worthy of emulation.

[26]Cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 17:1-11.

[27]Musonius Rufus, *Fragment* 8. I am citing from Abraham J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation: Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 31.

[28]See John M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan - 323 BCE – 117 CE* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 94-96.

Gentiles over' to immorality, but as Barth puts it, the "imagery is that of a judge delivering a man found guilty to execution. According to Eph 4.19, however, the guilty fools delivered themselves to the immoral practices."[29] They have made themselves liable to ἀσέλγεια and εἰς ἐργασίαν ἀκαθαρσίας πάσης ἐν πλεονεξίᾳ. Ἀσέλγεια is an indecent behaviour[30] often associated with sensuality,[31] whereas ἀκαθαρσία[32] denotes impurity or ritual uncleanness though its nuance here includes sexual indecency.[33] Πλεονεξία[34] is also a vice among both Jews and Greeks.[35] These three vices are named as characteristic features of τὰ ἔθνη. Morally, τὰ ἔθνη are portrayed as being corrupt (φθείρω)[36] by means of τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης. The use of ἀπάτης to qualify ἐπιθυμία implies amoral sexual passions that are either generated in or orchestrated by deception.[37]

The author contrasts his depiction of outsiders with the status of his readers in a direct, personal and emphatic note (ὑμεῖς δέ) to provide reasons to abandon the way of life associated with τὰ ἔθνη. Contrary to the plight of outsiders, the readers have 'learned Christ' and are being taught in him (4.20-21), hence the need for a radical change. The expression ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστόν suggests that Christ

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[29]Barth, *Ephesians 4-6,* 502.

[30]Cf. Rom 13.13; 1 Pet 2.21; 4.3; Mk 7.22; 2 Cor 12.21; Gal 5.19; Wis. 14.26; *T. Jud* 23. 1; *T. Levi* 17.11; Hermas. *Sim.* 9:15.3. The word sometimes bears a positive meaning of 'pleasure' and it often appears in a catalogue of vices in moral instruction.

[31]See Rom 13.13; 1 Pet 2.21; 4.3; Mk 7.22; 2 Cor. 12.21; Gal. 5.19; Wis. 14.26; *T. Jud* 23. 1; *T. Levi* 17:11; Hermas, *Sim* 9:15.3; Josephus, *Ant.* 20.112.

[32]Cf.2 Cor 12.21; Gal 5.19; Col 3.5; Prov 6.16; Eph 5.3 and *T. Jud* 14.5; *Barn* 10.8,18.

[33]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians,* 303.

[34]Πλεονεξία with the preposition ἐν is either instrumental of means, manner or cause. The context poses difficulty for identifying the exact syntactical function of the dative case.

[35]I will devote more attention to these vices in a later discussion on 'Virtues and Vices."

[36]The word could be translated 'to kill, ruin or destroy' but in moral instruction it conveys the meaning 'to lead astray, corrupt or degenerate'. This is the sense it conveys here in Ephesians.

[37]See similar rhetoric in Philo, *Decal.* 55, Philo, *Contempl.* 40-43 and 1QS 4. 6, 9, 17-23, Wis. 14. 22-31.

himself is the content of what they have learned (μανθάνω). It is uncertain whether this refers to his teaching, character or Christian tradition in general but the following statement seems to indicate that what is in view is a form of learning that is centered on Christ. The pedagogical expressions (μανθάνω, ἀκούω, διδάσκω) imply knowledge that is acquired through education. Thus, the current state of unbelievers is detestable and incompatible with what the believers have come to know of Christ,[38] καθώς ἐστιν ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ.[39] Christology then takes centre stage as the content of what they have learned, the basis for their conduct and the reason to leave their past behind.

In summary, 4.17-21 sets the rhetorical framework for the rest of the outsider-insider contrast in the paraenesis of Ephesians. Here, the author utilizes a partly Jewish rhetoric of differentiation to characterize the acuteness of the divide in order to underscore the identity and oneness of those who are in Christ. In a stereotypical Jewish fashion all outsiders are categorized as τὰ ἔθνη who are unclean and alienated (cf. 2.12) from God. This rhetorical strategy not only indicts all outsiders but it also promotes a strong sense of identity and bond of unity among the believers. For Gentile believers, this may evoke a strong sense of belonging to the people of God. It is on this note that the author proceeds naturally to use images such as old-new, darkness-light and unwise-wise to establish moral and identity boundaries. Grammatically, the old-new antithesis is part of the sentence (4. 20-24) that provides the reason for differentiation.

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[38]See Markus Barth, *The Broken Wall: A Study of the Epistle the Ephesians* (London: Collins, 1960), 195. Barth suggests that 4. 20-21 shows that the conduct of the church had discredited evangelism since they did not depart from their old ways and showed little knowledge of the 'truth in Jesus.' As I have demonstrated in the analysis of the text, this is a misreading of the text.

[39]This phrase is quite ambiguous and it is sometimes taken to mean that 'Jesus is the embodiment of truth' or 'Jesus is a true example' or a *terminus technicus* for Christian tradition.

2.2 THE OLD AND NEW NATURE/HUMANITY

The 'old and new' antithesis is one of the three main areas (along with darkness-light and unwise-wise) where a strong antithetical imagery or rhetoric is used to differentiate the readers from their unbelieving counterparts. In light of the wider discussion, I will carefully examine the nature of these contrasts and their social ramifications. The question of whether or not the old-new contrast promotes social distinction or withdrawal from the outside world is central to this analysis. For the sake of clarity, the main discussion will be sub-divided into two parts to consider: first, the character of the old and second, the nature of the new. This division follows after the literary pattern in 4.22-24. I will pay particular attention to the rhetorical strategy, social implications and theological motivations for the *modus vivendi* and also how Greco-Roman moral conventions are brought to bear in the author's discourse. However, the textual analysis will be preceded by a brief discussion on the status of 4.22-24 - whether it should be treated as an ethical admonition or otherwise.

The syntactical function of the two aorist infinitives in 4.22 and 4.24 (ἀποθέσθαι and ἐνδύσασθαι) and their implications to the paraenetic discourse here is a debated matter - whether they bear imperatival force or function as indicative verbs. Burton has argued for imperatival interpretation and asserts that "there is apparently no instance in the NT of the aorist infinitive in indirect discourse representing the aorist indicative of the direct form."[40] This view is further supported by the fact that all of the approximately one hundred and fifty aorist infinitives found in indirect address in the

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[40]Ernest De Witt Burton, *Syntax of Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1900), 53 cited from Wallace, *Greek Beyond the Basics*, 605.

NT bear imperatival force.[41] Among modern scholars, Best and Muddiman have added that the ethical context of the instruction also makes the imperatival reading plausible as it anticipates a behavioural response.[42] However, another school argues that the aorist infinitives are dependent on the preceding verse and express the content, purpose or result of what had been taught (4.21). Wallace contends that though aorist infinitives in the NT generally bear imperatival force, the controlling verbs in all those appearances imply a form of command, hence his dismissal of the argument based on statistics and ethical context in Ephesians.[43] Proponents of this view point to διδάσκω in 4.21 as the controlling verb and understand the aorist infinitives as a form of reminder referring to the past, probably pre-baptismal event.[44] The notion of baptism is however deduced from the clothing metaphor[45] to support the debate on syntactical function.

The main difference between the two positions as it relates to the task at hand is that the first view suggests that the imperatival infinitive requires decisive and proactive response from the readers with regard to good behaviour. The second view, however, suggests that the aorist verbs in the infinitive (ἀποθέσθαι and ἐνδύσασθαι) point to a past event in relation to discipleship as the basis for the instruction that follows.[46] The argument for an exception to the common use of aorist infinitive in the NT here is less certain. Conceptually, it appears inconsistent with the argument that the content of their

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[41]Wallace, *Greek Beyond the Basics,* 605, 608. Wallace, however, suggests that the aorist infinitives in Ephesians 4: 22-24 may be an exception.

[42]See Best, *Ephesians,* 430-432 and Muddiman, *Ephesians,* 217. See Barth, *Ephesians 4-6,* 542.

[43]Wallace, *Greek Beyond the Basics,* 605.

[44]This includes Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 284, O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 318, 326-329 (among others); the New International Version translators of the Bible also follow this position.

[45]See Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality,* 67. Meeks is one among many who interpret the clothing metaphor to have baptismal allusions. The old and the new contrast refers to baptism elsewhere in the Pauline corpus (cf. Rom 6.1-11).

[46]Martin Kitchen, *Ephesians* (NTR; London: Routledge, 1994), 86. Kitchen assumes that this should be the obvious reading of the text without any attention to the alternative view.

learning was Christ (4.20), about whom they have heard and in whom they have been taught (4.21). To link 4.22-24 directly to the preceding verse as the content of what is taught poses questions about why the link is only with διδάσκω and not also with ἀκούω as the two verbs are linked by a coordinating conjunction. The lack of answers to these questions, and the fact that it forms part of the ethical instruction makes it preferable to see them as imperatival infinitives. I will therefore treat ἀποθέσθαι (4.22) and ἐνδύσασθαι (4.24) as imperatival infinitives, since this fits the context better grammatically and conceptually.[47]

2.2.1 THE CHARACTER OF THE 'OLD'

The first aorist infinitive (ἀποθέσθαι) is placed in an emphatic position (4.22) to reiterate the urgency to leave the past behind and be differentiated in a more dramatic term. It is important to note that the readers' pre-conversion past is akin to the current state of unbelievers/outsiders in the logic of the author. They are entreated to rid themselves of elements of τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον (4.24). The clothing metaphor, to 'throw away' or 'strip off,'[48] (ἀποθέσθαι) is employed to call for a paradigm shift and departure from the previous way of life (Col 3.9-10). This metaphor is commonly used in Greek and Jewish literature, even in the Old Testament,[49] and the import here is to show the manner

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[47]Frank Stagg, "The Abused Aorist," *JBL* 91 (1972): 222-231. See Stagg's discussion on the function of aorist verbs in the NT (p. 231).

[48]See Clinton E. Arnold, *The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface Between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 276, 278. Arnold suggests that translating the verb as 'strip off' or 'remove' vivifies the clothing imagery, as in the case of Col 3.9-10.

[49]Euripides, *Iph Taur* 602, Libanius, *Ep.*968; Apuleius, *Metamorphosis,* xi.24; *Acts Thom.* 36, 66 Ecclus 45.8; Philo, *Ebr.* 86; *T. Levi* 8.2; *1 En.* 62.14-16; 1QS 4.8; Job 29.14; 35.26; Ps 132.9; Isa 59.17; 61.10. The metaphor also appears in the NT in a similar vein: Rom 13:12; 1 Pet 2:1; Heb 12:1; Jas 1:21; Eph 6.11. Also Best, *Ephesians,* 431 and Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 284-285. They give more examples of the use of the metaphor in antiquity.

and nature of the sharp contrast.[50] The anthropological imagery τὸν παλαιὸν **ἄνθρωπον** ... τὸν καινὸν **ἄνθρωπον** contrasts the *previous* nature/humanity with their *current* status or nature in Christ. This motif is also prevalent in the Pauline corpus. Its appearance in Col 3.9-10 similarly points to discontinuity with the pre-conversion past and the need to put on a new identity that is fashioned in the likeness of God.

Barth suggests that the unusual appearance of ἄνθρωπος along with the 'old' and the 'new' contrast may imply an Adamic Christological undertone, thereby 'putting off the old Adam' and 'putting on the new Adam.'[51] In both Ephesians and Colossians the new is depicted in what seems to be an allusion to the creation narrative in Genesis 1 and 2, contrasting the 'old' and fallen humans (Gen. 3) with the new humanity also created after the likeness of God. The motif is also present in Rom 6.1-11 and 2 Cor 5.16-17, where the pre-conversion past and the current status of believers are contrasted in terms of 'old' and 'new' or 'death' and 'resurrection' (cf. 2.1-10). However, this imagery is not used in the undisputed Pauline letters to call for social withdrawal from outsiders. It has more of a temporal nuance to show a transition from the past to the present. The status of outsiders is depicted here as old because members of God's new order used to belong to it and also because it precedes God's new order and needs to be cast aside.

Structurally, the old-new antithesis is contingent upon 4.17-21, where it is imperative to dissociate from the conduct of τὰ ἔθνη, the state of the readers' past (1.18; 4.1), in the author's rhetorical framework. The nature of the church and what is expected of them in 4.1-16 also stands in antithesis to the old way of life. However, the readers are not in reality detached from the old nature, hence the call to take personal

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[50]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians,* 304. MacDonald and others argue that such discontinuity is an allusion to baptism (cf. Rom 13.12; 1 Pet 2.1; Heb 12.1; Jas 1.21).

[51]Barth, *Ephesians 4-6,* 544-545.

responsibility to ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν (4.22). They are therefore instructed literally to cast aside anything that is out of accord with their new status. Furthermore, what needs to be abandoned is τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν,[52] which is characterized as moral bankruptcy or ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης (4.22). This is not a call to social withdrawal or isolation from society but to abandon the thought patterns, immorality and the unbelievers' lack of life in/of God. In other words, they are being urged to distance themselves from the inappropriate conduct associated with their past and unbelievers (cf. 4.17). This ideological shift in self-understanding and perception of outsiders is supposed to prompt a radical shift from moral bankruptcy to moral excellence, as we shall see.

This moral identity is also constructed to reinforce a negative perception of outsiders. It is quite usual in social identity construction to portray and even exaggerate the status of the 'other' in negative terms in order to create a distinction between the insignificant 'other' and the privileged 'us.' This could also be deduced from the way more attention is devoted to discount and demean the 'old' in this passage. Contrary to the claim of some scholars, it is very unlikely that the author presumes that the addressees are so naïve as to understand this as a description of reality in society.[53] In social anthropology, the strategy would be called 'evaluative comparison.' This is where the differences between ingroup and outgroup members in selected areas are

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[52]Note that the author uses the same word that is used in 2.3 (ἀναστρέφω) to express the conduct (manner of life) of their pre-conversion past but in its noun form in 4.22 (ἀναστροφή).

[53]*Contra* Best, "Ephesians: Two Types of Existence," 40-41 and E.K. Simpson and F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Ephesians and Colossians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 103. Best and Simpson suggest that the depiction of the 'old' is a realistic account of the readers' past and a description of the wider society. Simpson states, "professing wisdom, ancient culture had branded itself with the stigma of downright futility." Best discusses the pericope as if the readers are already putting the instruction into practice. The fact is that what we have in Ephesians, at least here, is a textual construct from the author's perspective and any attempt to envisage how the instruction was received would be a mere speculation.

exaggerated in favour of the ingroup to promote group distinctiveness and positive identity.[54] The 'Gentiles' are stereotypically depicted as hopeless whereas 'all believers' are privileged to be part of the church. To say that their identity requires that they maintain a higher moral standing does not necessarily suggest social withdrawal or isolationism. Ethics are not promoted in a vacuum but are often geared towards a concrete situation, to benefit a group of people or state, religious entity, family etc. In this case, the identity of the readers and the ecclesiastical community to which they belong mark the context within which the paraenesis finds its relevance and applicability.

2.2.2 THE 'NEW' NATURE/HUMANITY

The need for radical transformation is issued in an unequivocal entreaty to be renewed (ἀνανεοῦσθαι) in the mind (4.23). The contrastive δέ points to a radical shift of direction towards the new and this can also be seen in the use of the connective καί to link this verse to 4.24. The present passive infinitive ἀνανεοῦσθαι implies a continuous process that requires both an external agent and their own initiative to be actualized. Presumably, the subject of the passive verb is God or the Holy Spirit[55] whose function is to renew the νοῦς. Conceptually, this is antithetical to the claim that the outsiders are ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ in 4.18. While the διάνοια of τὰ ἔθνη is subject to the influence of evil spiritual forces (cf. 2.1-3), the readers are urged to yield to a positive transformation of the νοῦς by the enabling of the Holy Spirit. Currently, there is a consensus that πνεῦμα here refers to the human spirit as the locus in which the renewal

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[54]Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 53.

[55]O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 329. There is a consensus among modern commentators that the verb is passive and not middle, and O'Brien further argues that God is the one doing the act of renewing.

occurs.[56] Τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοὸς ὑμῶν therefore refers to the inner life, spirit belonging to the mind or the mind. However, this does not exclude the work of the Holy Spirit;[57] theologically the one who does the renewal will naturally be the Holy Spirit or God (cf. Tit 3.5; 2 Cor. 3.18). The subject of the passive voice must be a force which works for the interest of the church, presumably the Holy Spirit.[58]

In Rom 12.1-2, transformation from worldliness begins with the renewing of the mind as well. However, Romans and Ephesians use different verbs to explain the process of transformation - μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός (Rom 12.2) and ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοὸς ὑμῶν (Eph 4.23). The other difference between the two is that here human responsibility and divine activity are necessary for the renewal to take effect, whereas Romans places the onus on the individual alone. In Colossians, the renewing of the mind does not precede 'putting on the new' but it is rather a process in which their understanding is being renewed (Col 3.10). It is important to note that while the first feature of the 'old' is intellectual in nature (Eph 4.18), the first step of change is also intellectual activity, the transformation of the mind (4.23). More so, the transformation is shown to be a process but within the framework

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[56]Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 220; Best, *Ephesians*, 434-436; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 286-287; O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 330-331 and Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 709-712. Fee argues that the grammatical construction of the phrase suggests that πνεῦμα here refers to the human spirit but the use of πνεῦμα in the entire epistle for the Holy Spirit (except here) and the theological understanding of the early church would make the readers hear it as if the Holy Spirit is in operation as well. I would argue that the activity of the Spirit could rather be inferred from the passive voice – not in the use of πνεῦμα.

[57]See MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 305 and Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 200.

[58]Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 709-712. Fee observes rightly that the theological thinking of the early church would have made them think that the Holy Spirit is active in the process somehow. While Fee thinks the readers would infer that also from the use of πνεῦμα, I opine that such an inference would be more appropriately derived from the passive voice. In that case, πνεῦμα will maintain its nuance here as the human spirit while the Holy Spirit operates in the background as the subject of the passive voice.

that any behaviour that mirrors the lifestyle of outsiders has no place in the new community.

Furthermore, the renewing in the mind (4.23) is linked with the coordinating conjunction καί to indicate a natural flow from a change of mind to a decisive action. The clothing metaphor (ἐνδύω) is employed to admonish the readers to 'put on the new nature' (4.24). They do not yet embody the totality of the new nature since it is rather a process of transformation from the old (ideologically and morally) heading in the right direction. It is therefore a call to become and not a statement of who they are. The new is God's creation and constitutes the virtues that are expected to be exhibited. For their new identity is created after the likeness of God.[59] The concept of creation[60] echoes 2.10 where the purpose of their creation is similarly enshrined in ethics. Here, the metaphorical newness in God's likeness is created ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι, which is further qualified as being authentic (ἀλήθεια).

The status of τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον as *imago Dei* strictly refers to God's attributes of righteousness and holiness. The two words δικαιοσύνῃ and ὁσιότης feature in ethical contexts to denote sound morality in a general sense.[61] The use of clothing terminology to express virtuous living is also found in Plato and Philo. For example, Plato talks about 'wearing a virtue or excellence instead of clothes'[62] while Philo asserts

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[59]The phrase κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα may indicate the source and standard of creation. The ambiguity in a translation like 'according to God' requires a further explanation on how God the creator could also be understood as the model for his creation. See also O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 331.

[60]The concept of 'new creation' is inherent in the new thing God is doing – renewing, new humanity and here the creation of the new humanity. Both O'Brien and Lincoln suggest that the 'creation of the new man' is an explicit attestation of 'new creation (pp. 287 and 287 respectively). The implied references and explicit statement of God's new creation in Ephesians will be examined in a later discussion.

[61]R. A. Wild, "Be imitators of God: Discipleship in the Letter to the Ephesians," in *Discipleship in the NT* (ed. F.F. Segovia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 127-43 and Best, *Ephesians*, 437-439.

[62]Plato, *Rep.* 457A.

that 'the mind of the wise is clothed with virtues.'[63] In some cases, the two words appear separately where δικαιοσύνη is used for ethical dealings with people and ὁσιότης for the right attitude towards the gods or metaphysical entities.[64] In Philo, the two words appear together sometimes to denote two separate forms of conduct[65] and on other occasions as a pair to connote virtues in a comprehensive sense.[66] It is therefore not surprising that the two nouns appear as pairs and sometimes separately in the NT and in some early Christian literature (cf. Lk 1.75; 2 Thess 2.10; 1 Clem 14.1; 45.3; 2 Clem 6.9; 15.3; Tit 1.8; Rev 16.5). Out of the three appearances as a pair in the NT, two are in the reversed order but in all three occurrences the expression connotes virtuous living in a comprehensive sense. Later in Ephesians, δικαιοσύνη appears as an individual virtue that needs to be exhibited (5.9; 6.14). However, the 'new' nature is characterized here as the moral image of God that needs to be exemplified in the believing community (4.24). This is true and authentic conduct (ἀλήθεια) as opposed to pretence or deceit associated with their past. Plato contends that ὁσιότης and δικαιοσύνη are the two most important virtues that characterize a person who is self-controlled and worthy of respect and public admiration.[67] Here, virtuous living is a characteristic feature of the readers' new identity.

In summary, the old-new antithesis indicts the previous lifestyle of the readers, which is akin to the current status of outsiders, and call for the need to be transformed in their minds and exhibit virtuous living. Appeal is made to their identity as that which is made in the likeness of God and exemplified in holiness and righteousness. The author

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[63]Philo, *Fug.* 110.
[64]See Plato, *Gorg.* 507; *Rep.* 10.615; *Laws* 2.663; Josephus. *Ant.* 8.245.
[65]Cf. Philo, *Virt.* 47.
[66]Philo, *Virt.* 50. See also *Spec.* I. 304; *Fug.* 63.
[67]Plato, *Gorg,* 507c. Also Plato, *Lac,* 199d and *Prot,* 349b.

also associates the old with the sphere where forces of evil influence the understanding of unbelievers, and the domain of the believers as a place where the Holy Spirit is active to renew their minds.

Rhetorically, the use of contrastive pattern is not atypical in the Greco-Roman world's moral discourse.[68] It was and is usual to accentuate the status of the 'other' in attempts to clarify identity boundaries and promote suitable demeanour for an ingroup.[69] As noted above, this is a textual construction and reinforcement of the believers' identity as it relates to the 'other' in a manner that indicts their previous lifestyle as unacceptable in the new community. It is not a historical narrative of how the church separated itself from the outgroupers or a realistic social comparison. The strategy is to demarcate boundaries between τὰ ἔθνη and the 'new man/nature,' and also to underline the distinctiveness of Gentile insiders in relation to the outsiders, who are labeled as Gentiles in this passage. Lieu has shown that this form of identity construction was not unusual. She asserts that, "boundary drawing always involves a process of selection: in relation to those defined as 'other,' it is the selection of certain differences over actual similarities; in relation to those defined as 'us,' it is the selection of certain similarities as overriding undoubted differences."[70] For example, in his rhetoric of identity, Pericles

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[68]See K. Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.25.2 (1984): 1340-1341.

[69]Cf. George Kennedy, "Truth' and 'Rhetoric' in the Pauline Epistles," in *The Bible as Rhetoric: Studies in Biblical Persuasion and Credibility* (ed. Martin Warner; London: Routledge, 1990), 196. Kennedy explains that religious systems sometimes claim exclusive truth that may not necessarily withstand the scrutiny of those who do not belong to the same religion. It appears that Ephesians claims such understanding of the outgroupers and employs rhetorical tools of the era to persuade the readers.

[70]Judith Lieu, "Impregnable Ramparts and Walls of Iron," 302.

stressed the commonalities of Athenians and positive features in Athens over and against what he depicted as the inferior and inept Spartan counterparts.[71]

The old-new contrast is depicted in three dimensions, namely intellectual, spiritual and moral. Intellectually, the 'others' are portrayed as having a futile mind-set, they are ignorant and darkened in their understanding whereas the believers are being urged to be 'renewed in the mind.' With regard to relationship with God (spiritual), the Gentiles are alienated from the 'life of God' but the believers are created in the likeness of God to bear his moral image. Morally, the 'old' is characterized as callous and associated with moral failure – licentiousness, greed, impurity and deceitful lusts, whereas the believers are called to acknowledge their distinctiveness and live in true holiness and righteousness. It is important to note that the need to differentiate from the old is only necessary because of the readers' identity in/with Christ (4.20-21) and their new creation after the likeness of God.[72]

The conceptual link of 4.24 and 4.25 is self-evident even though 4.25-5.5 continues in terms of an antithesis between virtues and vices. It is for this reason that I will discuss the virtues and vices in a separate (next) chapter.

2.3 DARKNESS AND LIGHT – 5.6-14

The darkness-light contrast is the second major antithesis by which the author seeks to differentiate the addressees from their unbelieving counterparts. I will examine it as part

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[71]David Konstan, "To Hellēnikon ethnos: Ethnicity and the Construction of Greek Identity," in *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity* (ed. Irad Malkin; Cambridge: Harvard University, 2001), 35.

[72]Leo G. Perdue, "The Death of the Sage and Moral Exhortation: From Ancient Near Eastern Instructions to Graeco-Roman Paranaesis," *Semeia* 50 (1990): 99. Perdue has aptly demonstrated that disciples usually assume or seek to establish a new social identity when their teacher is separated from them or dies. It is very possible that the identity and ideal moral construction we find here and in other parts of the paraenesis of Ephesians are necessitated by the absence of Paul or that Paul found the need to write them towards the end of his ministry.

of the author's use of binary oppositions to call for differentiation. The focus of analysis here is to explore the nature and function of the light-darkness contrast as it relates to the relationship between the readers and the outside world. The manner in which the author distinguishes his addressees from outsiders will be carefully examined.

The immediate context of the passage is a lengthy instruction on virtues and vices where the readers are urged to abstain from misdemeanour and live a life that befits their 'calling.'[73] It is on this note that this passage opens with a stern warning to resist negative influence. They are commanded not to yield to any form of deception (ἀπατάω) orchestrated by empty words (κενοῖς λόγοις [5.6]).[74] Κενοῖς λόγοις is associated with false prophets[75] and contrasted with truthful expressions elsewhere.[76] The agent of deception, the ones who may deceive the readers, is significant to our subject matter – whether they are insiders or outsiders.[77] In other words, are the readers being urged to dissociate from some of their own members who may seek to deceive them or from outsiders? Obviously, this will affect how we look at the rest of the antithesis. It is necessary to examine the phrase in 5.6 in order to establish the import of the opening statement.

There are three main issues to be addressed in an attempt to clarify the significance of the opening sentence: First, the *nature* of ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ, second, *the timing* of ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεου - mainly surrounding the syntactical function of ἔρχομαι, and third, *the character of the object* of ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ, namely τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας.

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[73]See the discussion on virtues and vices in the next chapter.

[74]See Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* II. 32, 225. The double dative functions syntactically as dative of manner and thereby indicates the manner in which the implied deception occurs.

[75]Hermas, *Mand.* 11:13. Cf. *Didache* 2.5.

[76]Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 2. 7.

[77]O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 364-365.

First, the expression ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ appears mainly in biblical literature as God's punitive retaliation or reaction to sin and sinners.[78] In the DSS, the wrath of God is directed towards those whose conduct is characterized by darkness (1QS 2.5, 6, 9, 15; 1QM 3.6, 9.).[79] There are only a few references to the 'wrath' of God/the Lord in the Gospels (cf. Mt 3.7; Mk 3.5 and Lk 21.23). However, the expression features thirteen times in the Pauline corpus to denote God's punitive reaction to sin,[80] except on two occasions where it bears unambiguous future eschatological connotation (Rom 1.18 and 1Thess 2.16).[81] Macgregor argues that, "of the thirteen Pauline passages where the divine wrath is mentioned, eight appear quite clearly to use the word 'wrath' with reference to the retributive judgment of God at the last day."[82] More so, in the *already/not yet* eschatological framework in Paul, God's wrath is expressed in punitive reaction to sin that may take effect wherever sin is present, either now or future. Thus, ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεου in 5.6 has the nuance it conveys in the Pauline eschatological framework.

The issue of the *timing* or occasion of 'the wrath of God' centres on the syntactical function of the verb ἔρχομαι, which appears in the present indicative. There are two main views regarding the function of ἔρχομαι in our text: most commentators[83] hold that it has both a present and future nuance, whereas others[84] argue that it only

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[78]Cf. LXX Deut 32.21-22; Is 10.5; 30.27f.; Mic 7.8-9.

[79]See 1QM 6.3. Here the wrath of God will be expressed towards his enemies in battle.

[80]Rom 2.5; 3.5; 4.15; 5.9; 1 Thess 1.10; 5.9; Eph 2.3; 5.6; Col 3.6.

[81]See Wallace, *Greek Beyond the Basics,* 101. Wallace indicates that the appearances of ὀργὴ in the Pauline corpus explicitly or implicitly connotes an eschatological motif on a frequent basis.

[82]G. H. C. Macgregor, "The Concept of the Wrath of God in the NT," *NTS* 7 (1960): 103.

[83]T.K. Abbott, *The Epistle to the Ephesians and Colossians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1910), 152, Barth, *Ephesians 4-6,* 566, Schnackenburg, *Ephesians,* 226, O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 365, Muddiman, *Ephesians,* 236.

[84]R. P. Meyer, *Kirche und Mission im Epheserbrief* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977), 270 and Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 326.

refers to a future event. In other words, one school argues that the 'wrath of God' is already present but will also be consummated in the eschaton, whereas the other indicates that it only refers to a future event. Syntactically, ἔρχομαι functions as a futuristic present[85] and could either denote 'completely futuristic' or 'mostly futuristic.'[86] Generally, whenever ἔρχομαι appears in the NT as a futuristic present its main import is that of immediacy and certainty as it relates to an event that has future effect. It is difficult to distinguish between a completely future reference (e.g. Jn 4.25; Rev 22.20) from that which has partial future effect (Jn 4.23), especially where there is no obvious deduction from the context. However, it appears that ἔρχομαι here is futuristic with some degree of present effect, as we shall see later.

The third and most significant issue to our subject matter is *the object* of 'the wrath of God' (5.6b), namely τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας. This is a Semitic expression to denote people who are disobedient, in this case disobedient to God (Prov 33.5; 2 Sam 7.10; 2 Thess 2.3). It appears earlier in 2.2-3 to characterize the readers' pre-conversion past as subject to the wrath of God and evil spiritual powers. These powers are also 'the rulers of darkness' (6.12 cf. 5.8, 11). Some scholars argue with Abbott that τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας bears the same connotation as in 2.2 and refers to unbelievers/outsiders.[87] Best admits to the lack of evidence to support any supposition that it refers to proto-gnostics or libertine insiders, yet he still asserts that "with Gnilka, Barth, Halter, we assume that it is insiders who are disobedient and who endanger the life of the

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[85]See Kleinknecht, *Wrath,* 98. It is argued that terms like ἔρχομαι, σώζω and ἡμέρα often appear with ὀργή in the NT not only to indicate a future action with particular reference to eschatology. Cf. Mt. 17:11; Lk. 23:29; Jn. 5:28; 9:4; 16:2, 25; 1 Thess. 5:2; Heb. 8:8; Rev. 1:7; 2:5, 16.

[86]Using the categories of Daniel Wallace in his *Greek Beyond the Basics.*

[87]Abbott' *Ephesians and Colossians*, 152. Also Brooke Foss Westcott, *Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1906), 77, Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 664, O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 365, Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 325 and Perkins, *Ephesians,* 118.

community."[88] However, O'Brien argues that there is enough evidence in the passage to establish that the readers are being cautioned to refrain from the negative influence of outsiders.[89] For MacDonald, the Semitic expression "is a very strong insider/outsider language relegating all nonbelievers to the realm of sin."[90] The evidence that 'sons of disobedience' refers to outsiders[91] is strong and justifiable within the context in which it appears, and God's wrath may be directed towards them as they engage in deceptive schemes and stand in disobedience to God. This is to say that 5.6 is consistent with the ingroup-outgroup differentiation that began in 4.17.

Furthermore, a careful look at the thematic link of 5.6 to 5.5 indicates that the author may not necessarily have any particular unbelieving deceivers in mind but is rather making a hypothetical argument *ad baculum*[92] as a rhetorical reinforcement of the severe consequences of inappropriate behaviour.[93] Perhaps, it is on this basis that an inference is made from the preceding clause to place a strong injunction on the addressees - μὴ οὖν γίνεσθε συμμέτοχοι αὐτῶν (5.7). But what is the social ramification of this injunction? Are they supposed to withdraw from society? From whom or what are they being instructed to distance themselves? It is commonly held that the pronoun (αὐτῶν) is an antecedent to the 'sons of disobedience' referring to unbelievers/outsiders

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[88]Best, *Ephesians,* 484.

[89]O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 365.

[90]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians,* 313.

[91]*Contra* Best, *Ephesians,* 484. Best argues that the source of deception may be insiders but the entire grammatical structure and the use of the expression 'sons of disobedience' in Ephesians makes Best's position unlikely.

[92]This is the form of argument that uses threat or severe consequence of violence to prompt the audience to do the right thing in order to avoid such consequences.

[93]Schnackenburg, *Ephesians,* 221.

(cf. 1 Cor 15.33; 2 Cor 6.14).[94] For Muddiman, this includes pagans, non-Christians and deviant Christians/insiders[95] but, as I have shown, it is very unlikely that the author has insiders in view. Best puts it more succinctly that, "the context indicates that those with whom the sharing takes place are the disobedient people. Believers are not to accept their views or participate in their vices."[96] The word συμμέτοχος will translate as 'to share', 'participate' or 'fellowship' and its nuance "is a participation in another's rights by becoming somehow identified with that other."[97] Muddiman argues that by employing this term, the injunction "includes every kind of social or commercial dealings with those put under the ban; it is not merely prohibiting assent to their views or intimate involvement with them."[98] However, it is noteworthy that the expression is not meant to describe simply unbelievers, but unbelievers as they are characterized by moral failure, namely disobedience. Various scholars have indicated that the context suggests a ban on participating with them in their deeds or way of life and not on contact or association with unbelievers in general.[99] Lincoln asserts that,

> The context here in Ephesians makes clear that what is involved is not a general distancing from all aspects of the Gentile world but in particular a separation from its immoral aspects. The readers are not to become partners with disobedient Gentiles in their sins and thereby also in judgment that will come on them.[100]

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[94]Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians,* 152, Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 326, Perkins, *Ephesians,* 118, Westcott, *Ephesians,* 77. *Contra* Schnackenburg, *Ephesians,* 226. He explains that this refers to the preceding vices in the passage.

[95]Muddiman, *Ephesians,* 237.

[96]Best, *Ephesians,* 486.

[97]Brendan McGrath, "'*Syn*' Words with Saint Paul," *CBQ* 14 (1952): 221, cited from Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 668.

[98]Muddiman, *Ephesians,* 237.

[99]O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 365, Perkins, *Ephesians,* 118, Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 669 and Westcott, *Ephesians,* 77.

[100]Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 326.

Thus, while the rhetoric seems to suggest a sharp social separation or isolation from outsiders, the import of συμμέτοχος here and the context indicate that the ban is rather on indulging in the unfitting conduct associated with outsiders.

Subsequently, the light-darkness metaphor is employed to highlight the magnitude of the difference and distinction between believers and unbelievers. The ποτε–νῦν schema (cf. 2.1-10; 2.11-22) is also used to draw a contrast between the past and present. The author personalizes the distinction by the depiction of the pre-conversion state as darkness and their current status as 'light in the Lord' (5.8). Their new identity is placed in the lordship of Christ (ἐν κυρίῳ),[101] the place or sphere where light shines. Thus, the light-darkness contrast is a vivid depiction of their miserable past (currently embodied in outsiders) and an unambiguous differentiation between who they were and who they have now become in Christ.

Best has explained that the reference to the believers as 'light' indicates what he calls 'noetic' or intellectual enlightenment - "They have light within themselves to guide them in their conduct."[102] However, the author would have qualified his use of the metaphor if he had intended to limit the scope of reference to intellectual activity (cf. 4.18, 23). Clearly, the imagery is not meant to be taken literally as a substance that darkens or enlightens but as metaphor between two extremes - a vivid categorization of an unpleasant state and a blissful one. Barth seems to have a better grasp of the comprehensive nature of such labeling when he explains the interlinked four dimensions of the use of the metaphor in antiquity, namely the ontic, ethical, existential and cultus

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[101]Syntactically, this is the dative of sphere or place.

[102]Ernest Best, *Ephesians – A Shorter Commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 253-254.

dimensions. He explains that the ethical dimension of the metaphor takes prominence in Ephesians 5.8-14[103] and asserts that,

> The recognition that outside and inside the Bible the light-darkness imagery has intellectual, ontic, ethical, existential and cultic dimensions and functions need not lead to the conclusion that these aspects, or some of them, are mutually exclusive. In the interpretation of Eph 5.8-14 especially it is impossible to operate with an either-or, and the same is probably true of the exposition of Philonic, Hermetic, and Mystery Religion texts. One or another aspect of the essence, power, experience, and consequence of light or darkness may receive special emphasis, but just as Wisdom is manifold and yet one so is the meaning of light and of darkness.[104]

Moreover, φῶς denotes the sense of happiness, victory and glory.[105] The first use of light-darkness in this passage is a contrast between life that is lived in the light and one that is lived in the sphere of darkness.

The light-darkness metaphor is a prominent feature in Jewish writings.[106] For example, Philo describes the state of unbelief as blindness and the converted as one who has received his sight instead of walking in 'profound darkness'- they live in 'the most brilliant of lights.'[107] Moreover, in *Joseph and Aseneth* conversion is a transfer "from darkness to light and from the error to truth."[108] Similarly, darkness typifies sin, insecurity and the domain from which God rescues his people whereas light represents salvation, clarity and life in the OT (cf. Ac. 26.18).[109] The imagery is also used to draw a sharp contrast between pre-conversion and post-conversion state in the early church.[110]

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[103]Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 600.
[104]Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, 601.
[105]See Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 670.
[106]Best, *Ephesians – A Shorter Commentary*, 253. Also 1QS 1.9-10; 2.16; 3.13, 20-24f; 1QM 1.1, 3, 7 ; *T Levi* 14:4; 19:1; *T Gad* 5.7.
[107]Philo, *Virt*, 179.
[108]*Joseph and Aseneth* 8.10. See also *T. Levi* 14.4; 19.1; *T. Gad* 5.7; *T Ben.* 5.3.
[109]Ps. 27:1; Isa. 9:2; 10:17; 42: 6, 16; 49:6; 60:1. Cf. *Odes of Solomon* 15; *Joseph and Aseneth* 15:13.
[110]Cf. Rom 13.12-14; Col 1.12,13; 1 Thess 5.5; 2 Cor 6.14; 1 Pet 2.9.

Generally, the NT characterizes darkness as negative, the evil domain from which people are redeemed into life in the light.[111]

The author focuses on conduct and instructs his readers to behave ὡς τέκνα φωτός (5.8). Their conduct ought to befit 'children of light' and bear καρπὸς τοῦ φωτός.[112] Τέκνα φωτός is a Semitic parlance that refers to a people characterized by light (cf. 5.6). The use of καρπός to refer to behaviour is not uncommon in the early church[113] and in Jewish literature.[114] It is important to note that the author seeks to clarify identity boundaries and reaffirms their new identity (τέκνα φωτός) in order to demand moral excellence (περιπατέω). For Ephesians, ethics is almost always rooted in the nature of the readers' identity or what its author calls a 'calling' (cf. 4.1).

The virtues associated with the 'fruit of light' are cardinal virtues in both Greek and Jewish circles (ἀγαθωσύνη, δικαιοσύνη and ἀλήθεια) and usually connote moral principles in general terms.[115] For example, ἀγαθωσύνη would best translate as 'goodness' or 'kindness',[116] and its qualification by πᾶς (πάσῃ ἀγαθωσύνῃ) indicates a more general use of the term (cf. Gal 5.22, Rom 15.14 and 2 Thess 1.11).[117] According to Philo, Moses taught that 'goodness' is a generic virtue that encapsulates the four cardinal virtues of prudence, temperance, courage and justice. In the earlier discussion on 4.24, I indicated that δικαιοσύνη sometimes appears with ὁσιότης as a *terminus*

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[111]Jn 1.4-5, 7-9; 3.19-21; 8.12; 19.5; 1 Jn 1.5; 2.8; Rom 13.12-13; 2 Cor 4.4, 6; 6.14; Col. 1.12, 13; 1 Thess 5.5; 1 Tim 6.16; 2 Tim 1.10.

[112]The word φωτός is replaced by πνεύματος in some manuscripts (P^{46} D^c K Ψ 104 614 1739^{mg}) most probably to match the reading in Gal 5.22 but the φωτός reading has stronger and more diversified witnesses in P^{49} ℵ A B D* G P 33 81 1759* vg $syr^{p, pal}$ $cop^{sa, bo}$ etc.

[113]Rom 6.21- 22; Gal 5.22; Phil 1.2, 11; Jn 15.2f; Mt. 7.16-20; 12.33-35; Lk 6. 43f; 13.7.

[114]*Odes of Solomon* 4.4; 8.2; 11.1; 14.6f.

[115]See J. Thomas, "Formgesetze des Begriffs-Katalogs im NT," *TZ* 24 (1968): 18-19.

[116]Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon,* 5.

[117]See the use of the word in 2 Chron 24.16; 2 Esdras 19:25,35; Rom 15.14; Gal 5.22.

technicus for sound morality.[118] However, when δικαιοσύνη features alone in the NT it often denotes a right relationship with God that is reflected in right or just dealings with people. Moreover, righteousness and truth feature frequently in Qumran literature both as virtues (1QS 4.24; 5.4; 8.2) and attributes of God.[119] The word ἀλήθεια sometimes means 'truth' vis-à-vis 'lies' but it also connotes the idea of genuineness, reliability, veracity or honesty in a comprehensive sense.[120] Best explains it as three "different ways of stating the nature of virtuous living."[121] Thus, while the rhetoric seems to suggest radical differentiation, the substance of ethics being promoted is shared by other moralists.

As 'children of light,' they are further challenged to discern what is morally right before the Lord (5.10). They have already been taught the 'truth' in 4.21 but δοκιμάζω denotes a deliberate inquisition to 'discern' or 'demonstrate' that which is morally acceptable to the Lord. Ethical values are therefore 'Christ learned' or discerning what is pleasing to the Lord for the author of Ephesians. Once again, Christology is central to defining or discerning what is morally 'pleasing to the Lord.' For Epictetus, moral discernment (δοκιμάζω) requires exercising one's mental prowess prudently, which he thinks is the task of a philosopher.[122] Ephesians suggests that 'the children of light' are also capable of discerning moral rightness but in accordance with the standard of their

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[118]See Plato. *Gorg.* 507; *Rep.* 10.615; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.245; Philo. *De Virt.* 50.

[119]1QS 4.40; 11.4,7; CD 3.15; 1QH 1. 26-27; 9.31-32.

[120]Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics,* 1096a.

[121]Best. *Ephesians,* 490. See also Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Truth: Paul and Qumran," in *Paul & Qumran: Studies in NT Exegesis* (ed. Jerome Murphy-O'Connor; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1968), 204-205 and Westcott, *Ephesians,* 78. According to Best, these are Christian virtues but it is rather questionable whether it is legitimate to claim that shared ethical values are distinctively Christian, as later discussion will show. Westcott reiterates that the words are used to refer to morality in general and further explains that they could be categorized to suit various aspects of morality. "The first includes personal character, the second social dealings, the third ruling principles, marking generally our obligation to self, our neighbours, God." Also cf. 1QS 1.5; 2.24-25; 5. 3-4; 8.2.

[122]Epictetus, *Disc.* 1. 20. 7; 2.23.6, 8; 4.6.13.

Lord. Elsewhere in the NT 'pleasing God/the Lord' is similarly an ethical goal for believers.[123] The irony is that the virtues depicted as the 'fruit of light' are also held as virtues in the outside world but the author does not acknowledge it.[124] In other words, the ethical ideals of society are legitimized and redefined theologically as values that will harness solidarity in the believing community.

When the author returns to elaborate on the negative features of σκότος (5.8), the first thing he demands is that they distance themselves morally from the negative praxis (ἔργον) associated with their past (5.11). Instead of bearing the fruit (καρπός) of virtues, σκότος is characterized as ἀκάρπος.[125] Ephesians also seems to follow the pattern in Galatians where virtues are characterized as 'fruits' and vices as 'works' (Gal 5.19-22). The second imperative with regard to σκότος is to expose its hidden elements or deeds therein (5.11b). By implication, they could not be physically isolated but positioned to make positive impact from within the realm of darkness. The meaning and function of the verb ἐλέγχω here has been a debated matter, especially following the discovery of the DSS. The word simply means to 'expose,' 'rebuke' or 'prove guilty.' It is sometimes used to imply condemnation of sin (Wis 4.20; 2 Esdras 12.32-33) and rebuke of wrongdoing or a call to accountability (Sir 19.13-17; Lev. 19.17). The notion of rebuke is present in Qumran where the sins of a fellow member of the community should be rebuked as a corrective measure.[126] Kuhn argues that ἐλέγχω should be understood as a form of 'rebuke' as one finds in Qumran (cf. 1QS5.25-6.1; 9.17; CD

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[123]Rom 12.1-2; 14.18; 2 Cor 5.9; Phil 4.18; Col 3.20; Heb 13.21. Also Gen 5.22, 24LXX.

[124]See later discussion on 'Virtues and Vices.'

[125]Cf. Mk 4.19; Tit 3.14; 2 Pet 1.8; Jud 12.

[126]1QS 5.23-6.1; 9:17; CD 7:2f; 9.6-8; 20.4; *T Gad* 6.3, 6; 1 Tim. 5:20; Jas. 5:19f and 1 Cor. 14:24-25. See also Kuhn, *Der Epheserbrief im Lichte der Qumrantexte*, 340.

7.2; 9.6-8).[127] He asserts that, "the proper way to act in the face of the works of darkness is to *rebuke* the person who commits the sin, i.e, to tell him that what he is doing is sinful."[128] Perkins reiterates that it should be read as 'rebuke' after the Qumran tradition in 1QS5.24-25 and 1QS9.16-18a.[129] It is noteworthy that Kuhn and Culpepper have argued that Ephesians was influenced by the Qumran tradition and this passage needs to be understood within that framework. However, this interpretation is problematic for two reasons: (a) When it comes to the meaning of ἐλέγχω, it is suggested that the author is dealing with intra-church misdemeanour that necessitates corrective measures, but when it comes to light–darkness dualism the same scholars suggest that it refers to Qumran-type separatism (see review). These scholars fail to observe the contradiction in claiming that the 'works of darkness' refers to the misdeeds of insiders but 'darkness' refers to outsiders; (b) The proponents also assume that some members could claim a higher moral standing to correct their fellows who refuse to follow suit. However, there is little evidence to support this interpretation. Ephesians clearly shows that 'darkness' relates to the outgroup members or the readers' past vis-à-vis the ingroup, the metaphorical 'light.' This antithesis is consistently used in 4.17-5.21. Moreover, there is nowhere in Ephesians where individuals in the ingroup are given the mandate to correct others' behaviour in the community – not even in the *Haustafel.* It is therefore misleading to impose the Qumran tradition on Ephesians 5.6-14. Qumran literature may be examined to shed light on our understanding of various traditions in

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[127]Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," 124-125 and Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 678-679. Hoehner does not appeal to the Qumran tradition of rebuke but argues that it conveys the sense of confrontation or rebuke of an erring member.

[128]Kuhn, "Epistle to the Ephesians," 125. See R. Alan Culpepper, "Ethical Dualism and Church Discipline,"356.

[129] Perkins, *Ephesians,* 119. Also Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 678-680.

the NT era like other primary sources, but it is problematic to suggest that a shared tradition (light-darkness imagery) with Ephesians is indicative of the fact that Ephesians depended on it.

In his extensive study of ἐλέγχω in 5.11, Engberg-Pedersen explains that the verb connotes a form of confrontation with the intent to expose a hidden error.[130] He argues that it does not denote simple 'exposure' but an act of confrontation that is undertaken in order to meet that end. He states, "the addressees of the letter are enjoined not only to have anything to do with the works of darkness, but at the same time also, and quite to the contrary, to confront them directly in order to show up their falsity."[131] It is clear that the object of the verb is 'works', so if we accept this interpretation then it will mean to 'expose' the falsity of these works of darkness (deeds) and not a rebuke of persons. It is important to stress that Ephesians does not concern itself with the radical transformation of the outside world and neither does it expect its readers to impose their way of life on outsiders. Lincoln is quite right in stating that, "as they refuse to join in evil actions and display a different quality of life, they cast their illuminating beam into the dark recesses of the surrounding society and will invariably show up its immoral practices for what they are."[132] This is also to say that by living up to the 'Christ learned' values, they will be exposing the inability of the outsiders to reach these moral heights. This could be further substantiated by the fact that the 'works' are hidden and the following two verses further clarify that these are secret elements that the believers

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[130]Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Ephesians 5, 12-13: ἐλέγχειν and Conversion in the NT," *ZNW* 80.1-2 (1989): 89-110. Cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 329-230.

[131]Engberg-Pedersen, "Ephesians 5, 12-13: ἐλέγχειν and Conversion in the NT," 102.

[132]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 330.

need to bring to light. Perhaps, they should engage in good conduct, namely goodness, righteousness and truth in order to make manifest the 'works of darkness.'[133]

According to Ephesians, it is shameful (αἰσχρός) to speak about what the outgroup does in secret (5.12). It should be noted that the pronoun αὐτῶν refers to τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας (5.6), the unbelievers. The reference to σκότος as the readers' past and τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς ἀκάρποις τοῦ σκότους to their previous conduct is here associated with the unbelievers (5.12). The 'secret deeds' are the 'unfruitful works of darkness' and the notion that the readers' past is synonymous with the current state of unbelievers is sustained.[134] Schlier has suggested that the secret conduct here refers to sexual perversion but there is no overt statement to that effect.[135] The reference to 'shame'[136] as a reason to condemn misdemeanor alludes to the unwritten rule of propriety in the Greco-Roman society, namely the values of honour and shame, to promote group-specific ethics.[137] Pseudo-Isocrates states that "whatever is shameful to do you must not consider it honourable even to mention,"[138] and Cicero underscores the significance thereof,

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[133]The idea is not to transform life in darkness but to expose its sinful nature and make its deeds more visible and recognizable.

[134]Philo, *Opif.* 80. Philo establishes a similar principle when he noted that men who give themselves to loose conduct and unrestrained passions are impious and should not be named among the people of God.

[135]H. Schlier and Viktor Warnach, *Der Kirche im Epheserbrief* (Münster Westfalen: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1949) 239. Also Schnackenburg, *Ephesians,* 228.

[136]See Larry J. Kreitzer, "Crude Language' and 'Shameful Things Done in Secret' (Ephesians 5:4, 12): Allusions to the Cult of Demeter/Cybele in Hierapolis," *JSNT* 71 (1998): 51-77. Kreitzer has argued that the combination of 'crude language' and 'shameful things' in 5.4, 12 is a specific allusion to ritual activities led by the worshippers of Demeter in the Plutonium of Hierapolis. He rightly points to the obscenity involved but it is doubtful that such a widespread norm would be used in such a general way in an attempt to condemn a particular religious practice without naming it.

[137]Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians,* 37-38 and 51-52. Meeks argues that the cultural or widespread guiding principle in society, as loose a criterion that it may be, formed the norm of conduct in antiquity. Also Epictetus *Disc.* 1.6.20 4.9.5; 3.26.8; 4:1.177.

[138]Pseudo-Isocrates, *Demonicus* 15 cited from Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation,* 126.

> All our affairs, public or private, civil or domestic, our personal conduct, our civil transactions, inevitably fall within the province of duty; in the observance of duty lies all that is honourable, and in neglect of it all that is dishonourable...He who severs the highest good from virtue and measures it by interest and not by honour, if he were true to his principles and did not at times yield to his better nature, could not cultivate friendship, justice or liberality.[139]

The NT uses various terms for honour and shame that imply shared Greco-Roman ethical norms.[140] The word αἰσχρός, as it appears here, was commonly used in antiquity to imply activity or behaviour that should be detested, shameful or unspeakable among honourable people (cf. Isa 28.16; Rom 9.33; 1 Pet 2.6; *Didache* 4, 11). For example, Plato indicates that the values of honour and shame should restrain a young person from being disrespectful to the elderly and shame should prevent him/her from physical assault on the parents.[141] To call the believers to abstain from shameful acts then is to appeal to the widespread sense of propriety to prompt a sense of dignity and to detest the undignified and 'unfruitful works of darkness' associated with outsiders.[142]

The latter part of the light-darkness contrast (5.13) further indicates that light is meant to expose deeds done in darkness or in secrecy by restating the effect thereof - they will be made manifest or visible (φανερόω). Ephesians' use of the verbs ἐλέγχω and φανερόω here (5.11, 13) imply a situation where light overcomes darkness and makes manifest all that is concealed therein. The addressees cannot engage in this by being secluded from the wider society but by functioning from within the society. The believers (metaphorical light) are therefore urged to be vigilant and shine forth

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[139]Cicero, *On Moral Duties* 2.

[140]W. R. Domeris, "Honour and Shame in the NT," *Neot* 27.2 (1993):285 and 283-295. Domeris has argued that despite the widespread character of these values, some philosophical schools (e.g. Stoics) set their own standards for that which needed to be considered honourable and dishonourable.

[141]Plato *Rep.* 465b.

[142]*Contra* Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser: Ein Kommentar* (2nd Ed.; Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1958), 239. Schlier interprets the light-darkness contrast against gnostic background and suggests that the instruction in 5.12 is an allusion to gnostic libertine practices that are unworthy to be named or seen among the believers.

(ἐπιφαύσκω) with light that takes its source from Christ (5.14).[143] As Muddiman puts it, "the sleeper is the one who lacks moral vigilance; the dead are those sunk in sin; and the light is what both exposes immorality and also produces the fruit of good works."[144] In fact, the essence of light is manifested in darkness – light has no significance where there is clear visibility.

As I have shown in the review section, a significant number of modern scholars see close parallels between separatism in Qumran and Ephesians because of its rhetoric of differentiation, especially the light-darkness contrast.[145] It is argued that the light-darkness contrast in Ephesians was influenced by texts in Qumranic literature that call for radical dissociation from outsiders or to take similar isolated stance.[146] For instance, Kuhn contends that 5.9-11 is a clear depiction and avid continuity of Qumran tradition.[147] Culpepper shares this view and similarly argues for close parallels between the light-darkness metaphor in Ephesians and what one finds in the DSS.[148] However, the interpretation of Ephesians from a Qumranic perspective falls short in a number of ways: First, light-darkness contrast was common imagery for antithesis.[149] Second, the early church did not have to be acquainted with Qumran tradition in order to grasp what

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[143]Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 97-116. Cf. Isa 26.19 and 60.1f. The question of the source of this quotation is not relevant to our discussion since it does not affect the ethical import of 5.14.

[144]Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 243.

[145]See Kitchen, *Ephesians*, 92, Perkins, *Ephesians*, 117-122 etc. and also John Kampen, "The Sectarian Form of the Antitheses within the Social World of the Matthean Community," *DSD* 1, 3 (1994): 338-363. Following the discovery of DSS some scholars have tried to find parallels in the NT. Kampen argues that certain linguistic similarities between Matthew (especially 5.20, 48) and the Qumran writings is enough to claim that the wider context of Matthew is sectarian in nature. The fundamental problem of this kind of argument is a methodology that places the Essene Community at the centre of religious thought and experience. To claim that common linguistic features in the writings of two religious groups in a particular era are tantamount to common social structures could be misleading.

[146]Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," 117.

[147]Kuhn, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," 122-123.

[148]Culpepper, "Ethical Dualism and Church Discipline," 531-533.

[149]See O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 366 and L.R. Stachiowak, "Die Antithese Licht-Finsternis: Ein Thema der paulinischen Paranese," *TQ* 143 (1963): 385-421.

a particular letter entails; and third, the DSS is not the earliest text to use the metaphor so why should it form the background of its usage in Ephesians? Moreover, the DSS usage points to cosmic dualism (two opposing forces)[150] and not discontinuity with one's past or ethical duality.[151] In relation to the cosmic dualism in Qumranic writings, Knibb explains that, "basic to these beliefs is the conviction that there are two opposing forces in the world, the spirits of truth (light) and injustice (darkness), and that all men are under the control of one or the other (1QS3.17b-21a)."[152] Knibb further demonstrates that this worldview was common in Zoroastrianism, Jewish writings and even in the early church.[153] The light-darkness metaphor in Qumran is therefore only one among many sources to ascertain that its usage was widespread. Thus, (a) the claim that a mere use of the antithesis indicates Qumranic influence on Ephesians is flawed; and (b) the deduction of Qumran dualism from the light-darkness antithesis here is a misreading of the text.

Moreover, Frey has argued that Qumranic dualism (two spirits) was not even a major ideological drive for separation from outsiders. He explains that the concept was pre-Essene and must have been taken from some Jewish texts such as Enochic literature, Jubilees, Sirach or Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.[154] Frey asserts,

> The actual sectarian type of dualistic thought was not at all the dualism represented by the instruction on the two spirits, but to a larger extent a sheer cosmic dualism

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[150]1QM 1. 1-16; 3.6, 9; 13.16; 14.17; 1QS 3:18-21.

[151]See Jörg Frey, "Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought in the Qumran Library," in *Legal Texts and Legal Issues: Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies* (eds. Moshe Bernstein, et al.; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 283-285.

[152]Michael A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1987), 94-95. Knibb provides comprehensive discussion on the two ways (light–darkness) in Qumran in pages 94-103.

[153]Knibb, *The Qumran Community,* 95-96. See also Is 9.2; Ps 19.8; 107.10; 119.105; Dan 12.1; 1 En 9.1; Rev 12.7 etc.

[154]Frey, "Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought," 334-335.

> characterized by a strictly predestined division of humanity along the borderline of the community and dominated by opposing heavenly figures.[155]

So if the 'sons/angels of light' and 'sons/angels of darkness' antithesis is not a key factor for separation from outsiders in Qumran, as Frey argues, then how can it influence separatism in Ephesians? It is apparent that the antithesis in DSS is cosmic dualism (metaphysical) and has no bearing on the specific ethical use of the light-darkness imagery in Ephesians. The argument for both Qumran influence and sectarian features in Ephesians based on comparative study of both texts is therefore unconvincing. So what is the nature of differentiation in 5.6-14?

In summary, first the light-darkness contrast makes a very sharp rhetorical divide between believers and unbelievers, but the substance of ethics being promoted suggests otherwise. In fact, the virtues being encouraged are shared by other moralists of the day. The author makes the sharp distinction between their new identity and unbelievers as light is to darkness, and further indicts the conduct of outsiders in a general connotation, which is akin to their own past, as incompatible with their current status in Christ. Second, the readers' identity and morality are shaped by Christology. They are now 'light in the Lord' as opposed to 'darkness,' their past. It is on this basis that he calls them to bear 'the fruit of light' and to expose the shameful deeds in the dark world. The life of 'light' is to be lived where Jesus is the Lord of everything (5.8) and the goal of ethics is to 'please the Lord,' who is also the source of light (5.11,14). This Christocentric identity sets them apart from unbelievers, stands in sharp contrast to their past (darkness) and requires moral excellence that befits their new status (cf. 4.1).

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[155]Frey, "Different Patterns of Dualistic Thought," 307. *Contra* M. Jack Suggs, "The Christian Two Ways Tradition: Its Antiquity, Form, and Function," in *Studies in the New Testament and Early Christian Literature* (ed. D. E. Aune; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 67-68. Suggs argues that the use of light/darkness contrast and other dualistic imagery in 1QS 3 underscore the separatist character of the Qumran community.

Third, light is supposed to function and make a difference from within the sphere of darkness, exposing its unfruitful works and bringing hidden elements to light (5.13). This does not contradict the statement in 5.7 where the addressees are called to moral distance from the 'sons of disobedience.' Socially, differentiating oneself from a potentially bad influence in order to take a higher moral standing is not tantamount to isolation – it is a matter of taking a different ethical stance from others. Fourth, the substance of ethics being required from the readers does not differ from what one finds in other Greco-Roman moral discourse. The substance of ethics here is therefore not unique in that regard. The differentiation lies primarily in their identity construct as it relates to the 'other' and the fact that moral excellence is achievable or expected of whom they have become. Fifth, the Qumranic reading of the light-darkness metaphor is quite misleading in the way it seeks to influence the nuance of ἐλέγχω in 5.13 and imposes Qumran-type dualism on the passage. Unlike the light-darkness metaphor in the DSS, the one in Ephesians has ethical impetus and does not call for social withdrawal or introversionist stance.

2.4 THE WISDOM – FOLLY CONTRAST - 5.15-21

This passage flows naturally from the previous antithesis between light and darkness. The connective οὖν (5.15) recalls the previous antithesis as the platform to call for moral vigilance[156] and radical departure from the conduct (περιπατέω) of the fools (ἄσοφος). The addressees are thereby urged to behave as the wise (σοφός) and to desist from any behaviour that is associated with the ἄσοφος outsiders. The ἄσοφος-σοφός contrast

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[156]The use of βλέπω to call for vigilance is common in the Pauline letters (1 Cor 3.10; 8.9; 10.12; 16.10; Gal 5.15) and here it is further qualified by ἀκριβῶς to underscore the degree of vigilance being espoused (cf. Lk. 1.3; Acts 18.25, 26; 23.15, 20; 24.22).

begins with a clear indication that its scope of reference is moral behaviour (note the main verb περιπατέω in 5.15). It is noteworthy that the adverbial expressions ὡς ἄσοφοι...ὡς σοφοί are comparative and not absolutes. In other words, it is an injunction not to behave (περιπατέω) *like fools/unwise* but *like/as the wise.* Structurally, the rest of this paragraph, extending to the end of the household code in 6.9, is subsidiary to this ἄσοφος-σοφός [157] contrast. The addressees are entreated to be vigilant and abstain from unwise behaviour (cf. Deu 32.6, Jer 4.22; Prov 1.22; 6.12) and to conduct themselves as the 'wise.' The call to renounce the ways of ἄσοφος is a stereotyping of outsiders that alludes to a conventional moral categorization.

It is a standard part of Hellenistic tradition, especially among Stoics, to use the wise and unwise/fool labels to differentiate the morally good from morally bankrupt. In Stoicism, the ἄσοφος [158]or ἄφρων is the morally bankrupt and inept in the use of common sense for one's personal wellbeing or for the good of others.[159] Conversely, σοφία or its synonym φρόνησις was the crown of all cardinal virtues.[160] Thus, "if the essence of virtue be intelligence, then the essence of vice must be ignorance."[161] It is in this vein that a few who were deemed wise commanded social respect. These were those

> who never gave assent to false presentation, and never felt the emotions of appetite, fear or pain. He (the wise) benefited other wise men and himself, and gave kindness to base men who were not capable of receiving benefits; he could not harm another man or be

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[157]The verb περιπατεω in 5.15 directly refers to the ἄσοφος and σοφός contrast and subsequent sentences play supplementary roles to clarify the thesis not to be like fools but to behave as wise. The pericope is structured in three μὴ–ἀλλα antithesis (5.15, 17, 18-24) to elaborate the point.

[158]This is a synonym of ἄσοφος.

[159]Margaret E. Reeser, "The Stoic Wise Man," in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy vol. V* (Eds. John J. Clearly and Daniel C. Shartin; Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 109-110.

[160]John Ferguson, *Moral Values in the Ancient World* (London: Methuen & Co, 1958), 30. See also Plato, *Phaed.* 69a ff. and *Laws*, I. 631c., *Prot.*, 330a.

[161]Ferguson, *Moral Values in the Ancient World*, 30.

> harmed himself. He was infallible in his knowledge of all crafts. He was a man who possessed a fixed disposition of the soul, synonymous with virtue and truth.[162]

In Plato, the wisdom of the wise is demonstrated in conduct and in acts of bravery.[163] Aristotle reiterates that 'practical wisdom' is demonstrated in conduct, as the means by which all virtues are put into effect.[164] For Aristotle, "real wisdom involves knowing the right values, the things that are good or bad for man, as well as being able to put them in practice."[165] However, vices are portrayed as the traits of the fool while virtues are attributes of the wise.[166] Cicero indicates that wisdom is the only virtue that uses both theory and praxis for a good end[167] hence the Stoics "can basically explain σοφία only with reference to the conduct of the wise man."[168]

Conversely, the condition of the 'unwise' person and his weakness is demonstrated in the fact that,

> He can only act from deficient strength and stability resulting from his imperfect correspondence with cosmic nature, and thus only in a way that is not always unconditionally reliable. The wise person, as a perceiver, thinker, and actor, is the only interpreter of the good for human beings who is always reliable; he is the ideal human embodiment of the good.[169]

The two words used in Ephesians to describe the 'unwise,' ἄσοφος (5.15) and ἄφρων (5.17), were commonly used to depict the 'unwise' in moral philosophy. While wisdom is essential to differentiate good from evil,[170] ἄφρων[171] yields the exact opposite effect.

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[162]Reeser, "The Stoic Wise Man," 107.
[163]Terence Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 347-350.
[164]Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1140B and 1144B.
[165]Hutchinson, "Ethics," 208.
[166]Aristotle, *Eth. Eud.*, III.7, 1234a.
[167]Cicero, *Fin.*, III.55.
[168]Wilckens, "σοφία κτλ." *TDNT* VII.473. Also Herodotus, *Hist.* 4.77.
[169]Wolfgang Haase, "Commentary on Reeser," in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy Vol. V* (Eds. John J. Clearly and Daniel C. Shartin; Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 133.
[170]Plato, *Prot.*, 352c.
[171]It is standard practice to use the alpha prefix to indicate the antonym. E.g. σοφός and ἄσοφος in 5.15.

The fact that Ephesians does not define the moral condition of the unwise (5.15, 17) but simply calls the readers to desist from unwise conduct implies an allusion to this widespread notion of ἄσοφος.

Furthermore, the Hebrew Bible personifies wisdom as a feminine figure and portrays her as the one through whom the knowledge of God could be acquired.[172] She is the creation of God (cf. Job 28.12-28) upon whom humanity depends in their quest to become wise in the things of God.[173] Ephesians' command to conduct one self as the 'wise' will therefore resonate as a call to moral excellence to both Hellenistic Jews and Greeks in its readership. They have already been told that unbelievers lack sound moral judgment (4.17-18), but they have 'learned Christ' and are supposed to be renewed in their minds (4.20-23). The injunction on behaviour associated with 'fools' and the imperative to live as the 'wise' is a prescription for moral excellence. Moreover, the author seems to have reserved the unwise-wise contrast to the last of his three main antitheses as part of the rhetorical strategy to utilize an imagery that has strong ethical force in itself as a reinforcement for his case for moral excellence.

Contrary to the ways of the 'unwise,' they are urged to make wise use of time (5.16a). The author employs a commercial term ἐξαγοράζω[174] (cf. Gal 3.13; 4.5; Col 4.5) to imply a sense of buying that intensively exhausts all available options.[175] The word for 'time' here is καιρός and it denotes 'a period of time like days' and not a particular apocalyptic moment in human history.[176] As Pope explains, καιρός "is that immediate

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[172]Cf. Prov 1.20-33; 8.1-36; 9.1-6, 10-12.

[173]Sidnie White Crawford, "Lady Wisdom and Dame Folly at Qumran" in *Dead Sea Discoveries* 5, 3 (1998): 357 – 359. It is in this light that Torah was said to be the embodiment of the Wisdom of God.

[174]Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 580.

[175]Plutarch, *Crass.* 2. 5.

[176]Best, *Ephesians – A Short Commentary*, 265.

present which is what we make of it: Time charged with opportunity, our own possessions to be seized vitalized by human energy, momentous, effectual, decisive; Time, the inert, transformed into purposeful activity."[177] A prudent use of time was a virtue[178] that is commended in the OT (Dan 2.8) and also in Greco-Roman moral traditions. Seneca argues that it is prudent to make good use of time since there are many pressures in life to rob us of the best part of our time. He indicates that, "gather and save time, which till lately has been forced from you, or filched away, or has merely slipped from your hands...the most disgraceful kind of loss (of time), however, is that due to carelessness."[179] Thus, judicious time management is imperative and akin to wise demeanour. The reason for prudent use of time is provided as ὅτι αἱ ἡμέραι πονηραί εἰσιν. This expression does not suggest a horrific future eschatological event.[180] Ephesians rather refers to the moral decadence and activities of evil powers as prevalent in the immediate context and thereby calls for vigilance and prudence in time management as a matter of urgency.[181] It is 'the days' in which the readers live - 'the days' in which evil spiritual powers are influencing the outside world (2.1-3)[182] and where the believers are currently in combat with evil spiritual forces (6.10-12).

Furthermore, the author draws a contrast between ἄφρων and τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου (5.17). The contrast here is not between two conditions or states of individuals

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[177]R. Martin Pope, "Studies in Pauline Vocabulary – Of Redeeming the Time," *ET* 22 (1910-11): 553.

[178]Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* II. XII, XXV.

[179]Seneca, *On Saving Time,* I.1. Seneca devotes a whole essay to time management and its significance to productivity.

[180]See *T. Zeb.* 9.5ff.; *T Dan* 5.4; *Barn.* 4.9 and 1 Thess 5.1-11; Rom 13:11-14. It is generally understood that most of the appearance of ἡμέραι (plural) in the NT refer to some eschatological event but that is not the sense it conveys here (Cf. Tim 3.1; Jas 5.3; 2 Pet 3.3; Mt 24.19ff.).

[181]Also Best, *Ephesians –ICC,* 504. Cf. Pelagius; Origen, *Matt Cat* 134, GCS 41, 67.1; *Judges Hom* GCS 30, 467. 15ff.

[182]Also Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 694.

but a state of life versus an activity to engage in – what not *to be* (ἄφρων) versus what *ought to be done* (συνίετε). "Αφρων literally means senseless,[183] foolish[184] and denotes a lack of insight, perception of value and truth in ethical instruction.[185] This 'moral stupidity'[186] expresses itself in day to day life when an individual is confronted with moral choices and exhibits deficiency in making good judgment. They are therefore instructed to abstain from this sense of folly (cf. Prov 14.26; 21.20) and make a decisive effort to understand (σύνεσις) the wishes or will of their Lord. Conzelmann[187] claims that Jews perceived σύνεσις as a gift of God that could be obtained through prayer (cf. 1 Kgs 3.9; Dan 2.21; Ps 119.34). However, the Greek and Latin moralists, as I have indicated above, perceived understanding into life or moral discernment as a virtue that could be attained through philosophical instruction. The verb and its cognates in the NT usually denote a combination of that which is acquired through divine enablement and human effort (cf. Mt 15.10; Mk 8.17, 21; Rom 1.21; Col 2.2), as we have here. For Conzelmann "to be without understanding (in Paul) is not just a partial deficiency which might be overcome; it is total darkening, as such the work of God who can darken."[188] This is, however, not the case in 5.17 where the imperative requires personal responsibility to obtain this insight. However, it is possible that by seeking the 'will of the Lord' human efforts may be augmented by divine enablement. This is to say that the author implies that the quest to understand τὸ θέλημα τοῦ κυρίου is a legitimate pursuit of the 'wise' that could be contrasted with 'moral stupidity.' Thus, instead of being

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[183]Josephus, *B.J.* 1.32.3 and 2.14.8.
[184]Lk 11:40; 12:20; Rom 2:20; 1 Cor 15:36; 2 Cor 11:16; 12:6, 11; Eph 5:17; 1 Pet 2:15.
[185]See Brown, 'ἄφρων,' *NIDNTT* (electronic version).
[186]Foulkes, *Ephesians,* 157. This is a term coined by Foulkes.
[187]Conzelmann, "συνίημι κτλ," *TDNT* VII. 890.
[188]Conzelmann, "συνίημι κτλ," *TDNT* VII. 895

foolish, the prudent thing to do is to understand the desires of their master and to follow suit. Once again, their focus must be geared towards satisfying their Lord (cf. 5.10), a further proof of Christocentric praxis in Ephesians.

The third μή–ἀλλά contrast in this passage opens with a connective καὶ in 5.18 to indicate a continuity of the foolish–wise antithesis. Here, drunkenness is depicted as a characteristic of the fool and contrasted with a 'Spirit-filled' activity. The author continues his rhetorical strategy to state the negative counterpart briefly, make a sharp contrast with ἀλλά and proceeds to elaborate on the virtues that need to be developed. Apart from the link between drunkenness and folly in 5.18a, the author does not link ἄσοφος or ἄφρων with any other misdemeanour. Unlike fools, the readers are commanded to abstain from drunkenness: μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνῳ. Both Fee and O'Brien have suggested that this injunction would come as a surprise[189] but fail to substantiate their claim. Conversely, the condemnation of drunkenness was commonplace among Jewish and Greek moralists. The LXX uses the same expression here (μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνῳ) to condemn drunkenness and contrasts it with a praiseworthy conduct (Prov 23.31). Moreover, drunkenness is condemned and associated with foolishness elsewhere in Philo.[190] Plutarch condemns it and asserts that, "every self-respecting and orderly man would, I think, avoid drunkenness. For while, according to some, anger lives next door to madness, drunkenness lives in the same house with it."[191] Plutarch further expresses its foolish nature in no ambiguous terms,

> silence is something profound and awesome and sober, but drunkenness (μέθη) is a babbler, for it is foolish and witless, and therefore loquacious also. And the philosophers even in their very definition of drunkenness say that it is intoxicated and

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[189]Fee, *God's Empowering Presence,* 720 and O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 388.

[190]Philo, *Ebr.* 95, 125-126, *Plant.* 140-147; Prov. 23: 29-35 LXX; 2 Kgs 11:13.

[191]Plutarch, *Mor.* 503E. LCL.

> foolish talking; thus drinking is not blamed if silence attends the drinking, but it is foolish talk which converts the influence of wine into drunkenness.[192]

It is noteworthy that wine was part of a Mediterranean meal and it would be rather surprising if Ephesians had placed a ban on drinking wine among the believers.

Wine (οἴνος) was part of a staple meal and played a central role in cultic activities where it was used for sacrifices, libations, expiation or thanksgiving. It was therefore not unusual for devotees to drink excessively, for instance in the sanctuary of Dionysius, where they supposedly shared their drinks with the deities.[193] Fergusson and Kraemer have argued that ritual festivities at the Dionysian shrine included eating raw meat and heavy drinking as a means for empowerment by the 'god of wine' and the expression thereof.[194] Metzger asserts that, "in order to attain communion with their god the devotees of Dionysius (called Bachantes) drank wine until thoroughly intoxicated, experienced thus the influence of their god."[195]

The abundance of corn and οἶνος are understood to be a blessing from God by the Jews (Gen 27.28, 37; Joel 2.24 LXX; Cf. Num 6.3; Jdg 13.4,7; Lk 1.15, 7.33). Elsewhere in the NT, the drinking of wine is not condemned (1 Tim 5.23) but excessive drinking or drunkenness. Those who indulge in drunkenness are also disqualified to serve in church leadership (Tim 3.3, 8; Tit 2.3). Drunkenness features on the vice list in Gal 5. 19-21 and marks prodigality in Lk 15.13. According to 1 Cor 6.10, drunkards would be debarred from entering the Kingdom of God (Eph 5.5). Ephesians is therefore

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[192]Plutarch, *Mor.* 504B. LCL.

[193]Seesemann, 'Οἶνος,' *TDNT* V.162.

[194]Everret Fergusson, *Background of Early Christianity* (Second Edition; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 243 and Ross S. Kraemer, "Ecstasy and Possession: The Attraction of Women to the Cult of Dionysius," *HTR* 72/1-2 (1979): 57. See also Darko, "The Role of Spiritual Beings in Relation to Ethics," 9-35. I engage in a more comprehensive discussion on the religious context of Asia Minor.

[195]Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Content* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), 69.

consistent with the Greco-Roman moralists, the OT and the tradition of the early church (cf. 1 Thess 5.1-10; Rom 13.11-13) in condemning drunkenness, though the practice may have been rampant in popular culture. As Eadie observes,

> drunkenness was indeed an epidemic in those times and lands. Alexander the Great, who did a sacrifice to Bacchus and not to Mars, offered a prize to him who could drink most wine, and thirty of the rivals died in the course of competition. Plato boasts of the immense quantities of liquor which Socrates could swill uninjured; and the philosopher Xenocrates got a golden crown from Dionysius for swallowing a gallon (of wine) at a draught.[196]

According to Dionysus of Halicarnassus, the Greeks considered drunkenness as the 'least of all faults' but he indicates that there is still no excuse for a wife to get drunk.[197] Thus, the fact that the moralists condemned drunkenness does not necessarily mean the habit ceased to prevail or those who abstained from drunkenness distanced themselves from the rest of society.

According to Ephesians, this behaviour (drunkenness) is the locus or engineer of wantonness (ἀσωτία).[198] The word ἀσωτία denotes wastefulness, sexual excess, prodigality and extravagance.[199] Foerster defines ἀσωτία as 'wild and undisciplined life' and argues that its nuance in the NT is that of "wild and disorderly rather than extravagant or voluptuous living."[200] In Jewish literature, the fool is similarly depicted as a seductive feminine figure and linked with sexual misconduct. As Crawford explains, "she undergoes a major change from human figure (Prov. 1-9), to semi –

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[196]See Eadie, *Ephesians,* 397.

[197]Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. Ant.* II. 25.6.

[198]Cf. Prov. 23:29-33; Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 4. 41.

[199]Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1107b; Plato. *Rep.* VIII, 560E; Josephus, *Wars* 4.651; Tit. 1: 6; 1 Pet. 4:4. See *T Judah* 11.2; 12.3; 13.6;14.1. This disputable text, *T Judah,* has close parallels with Ephesians in the way it links drunkenness to sexual excess.

[200]Foerster, "ἄσωτος, ἀσωτία, *TDNT* I.507.

divine being (1 Enoch 42), to chthonic night demon (4Q184), but in all cases her portrayal continues an unfortunate emphasis on women's sexuality as sinful."[201]

There have been attempts to link drunkenness and wantonness associated with the fool in Ephesians 5.18 with some religious practices in Asia Minor. Rogers has argued that Ephesians 5.18a should be interpreted against the background of the "wild, drunken, practices connected with the worship of Dionysius or Bacchus, the god of wine."[202] He suggests three possible reasons to his claim: First, he claims that the use of ἀσωτία in connection with drunkenness is an allusion to Dionysian devotees who got drunk and engaged in licentiousness at the shrine.[203] Second, Rogers points out that the spiritual activity in the second half of the antithesis in 5.18-21 suggests that the first half may have equally had some spiritual undertone. He therefore contends that,

> if the filling of the Spirit has to do with a supernatural infilling of the Spirit of God, it would only be logical to suppose that the 'drunk with wine' could have a supernatural implication. The significance would then be a contrast with the filling of the 'spirit' of Bacchus through wine and the filling of the true and living God by His Spirit.[204]

Third, he also suggests that the appearance of 'hymns and spiritual songs' would resonate aspects of Dionysian worship where songs were often accompanied by drums, tambourines and dancing. Undoubtedly, Rogers' proposal is persuasive but it would be difficult to establish that this was meant to be prominent or the only point of reference for the readers as there were other factors that created room for drunkenness in Asia Minor. Gosnell has also proposed that we should read Ephesians 5.18a against the background of Greco-Roman mealtime setting where wine featured regularly and songs

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[201]Crawford, "Lady Wisdom and Dame Folly at Qumran, 366.

[202]Cleon L. Rogers, Jr., "The Dionysian Background of Ephesians 5:18," *BSac* 136. 543 (1979): 249.

[203]Also Kreitzer, "Crude Language and Shameful Things Done in Secret," 60-61. He argues that excessive drinking and sexual wantonness, which are deemed shameful in the larger society, were part of the feast of Haloa in Athens where Kore, Demeter and Dionysius formed part of the gods that are celebrated during the occasion.

[204]Rogers, jr., "The Dionysian Background of Ephesians 5:18," 256.

were sometimes sung in praise to a god.[205] Obviously, drunkenness would be a feature of such situations. Plutarch, for example, sought to establish a code of conduct on how to have good and fruitful conversations during mealtime when some members were likely to get drunk.[206] The discussion in Plutarch also indicates that it was not unusual for friends to get drunk at a dinner party. It is likely that the prevalence of drunkenness either in a religious context or at a mealtime setting would resonate with the reading of 5.18a but there is no evidence to prove that the author had any particular social setting in view. The theses of both Rogers and Gosnell, in my opinion, only add to the fact that drunkenness, though considered as unacceptable by moralists, was a widespread social practice, in domestic, cultic and wider social settings. A close look at 5.18-6.9 will show that the author's primary interest lies rather in the positive aspect of the admonition in 5.18b-21.[207] Ephesians condemns 'moral stupidity' as it is expressed in drunkenness and calls for probity and integrity in conformity to the 'will of the Lord.'

Contrary to being drunk with wine, the wise person is to be filled with/by the Spirit (πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι). The present imperative πληροῦσθε indicates a continual action and the scholarly consensus is that πνεῦμα here refers to the Holy Spirit,[208] not the human spirit.[209] The difficulty here centres on the syntactical function of ἐν preceding

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[205]Peter W. Gosnell, "Ephesians 5:18-20 and Mealtime Propriety," *Tyn Bul* 44.2 (1993):363-371.

[206]Plutarch, *Mor.* 614D – 615C.

[207]A. W. D. Hui, "The Concept of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians and Its Relation to the Pneumatologies of Luke and Paul" (PhD thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1992), 311. Hui has rightly shown that the author's primary interest lies in this half of the contrast but it is also true that the negative counterpart provides a degree of clarity and establishes clear boundaries for the positive instruction as well.

[208]Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 21 and Andreas J. Kostenberger, "What Does It Mean To Be Filled With The Holy Spirit? A Biblical Investigation," *JETS* 40:2 (June 1997): 232-233.

[209]See Abbott, *Ephesians*, 161-162, Westcott, *Ephesians*, 81 etc. Abbott and some others argued that πνεύματι refers to human spirit.

the dative πνεύματι (means or content). Generally,[210] ἐν πνεύματι is translated 'with the Spirit' to suggest that the Spirit is the substance or content by which they are filled.[211] However, this position has been challenged in recent scholarship. It is argued that there is not a single instance where the preposition ἐν takes dative after πληρόω to indicate content.[212] Wallace contends that, "the parallel with οἴνῳ as well as the common grammatical category of *means* suggest that the idea intended is that the believers are to be filled *by means of* the (Holy) Spirit."[213] This would imply that the content is not stated in our passage but the appearances of πληρόω elsewhere in Ephesians indicate that the believers would be filled with God or Christ as the substance of the act of 'filling'(1.23; 3.19; 4.10-11).[214] Thus, contrary to being counted among drunkards (fools), they are commanded to avail themselves, yield to or comply with divine activity in order "to be filled by the fullness of God by his Spirit, and let that be evidenced not by Spirit-inebriation, but by behaviour."[215]

Subsequently, the author proceeds with five anarthrous and subordinate participial clauses to πληροῦσθε[216] to elaborate the resultant effect of the Spirit-filled

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[210]See 'the New Revised Standard Version,' 'The New International Version,' 'The New King James Version,' 'the New American Standard Bible' and the most recent 'Today's New International Version.'

[211] Handley C.G. Moule, *Ephesians Studies* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900), 275-276.

[212]Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics,* 93 and Fee, *God's Empowering Presence,* 721. They indicate the verb usually takes the genitive in the NT to convey such meaning.

[213]Wallace, *Beyond the Basics*, 375. Also O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 391-392.

[214]O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 392, Wallace, *Greek Beyond the Basics,* 375 and Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 344.

[215]Fee, *God's Empowering Presence,* 714. See also Kostenberger, "What Does it Mean to be Filled with Spirit," 231- 234. He argues for a similar view and critiques the use of this verse to encourage individual need for Holy Spirit empowerment for ministry.

[216]See Timothy G. Gombis, "Being the Fullness of God in Christ by the Spirit: Ephesians 5:18 in its Epistolary Setting," *TynBul* 53.2 (2002): 259-271, J. Gnilka, *Der Epheserbrief* (HTKNT 10.2; Freiburg: Herder, 1971), 270 and H. Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser: Ein Kommentar* (Dusseldorf: Patmos, 1971) 246. Gombis revisits a view that was put forward earlier by Gnilka and Schlier about the syntactical function of the participles expressing the *means* by which the church will be filled by the Spirit. In other words the speaking, singing, thanksgiving and submission are the means by which the believers would be filled by the Spirit. This view has been aptly dismissed by Wallace (*Greek Grammar*

activity in the community of believers (5.19-21).[217] The first is to edify one another with edifying speech (5.19).[218] The word (λαλέω) is never used to mean the act of singing. They are being urged to speak to one another by means[219] of ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς. Generally, commentators seem to miss the fact that the main verb (though participle of result) indicates speech or conversation and quickly assume that the mention of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs imply a form of singing in a worship setting.[220] In the first place, Ephesians does not establish any distinction between the believers' social life (private or public) and their conduct in their respective house churches. Secondly, the nature of the contrastive patterns suggests that the paraenesis applies to every aspect of the believers' conduct and being as opposed to the nature and character of unbelievers. Thirdly, this very sentence (from 5.18-21) flows into the discussion on domestic codes and while corporate worship may be deduced, its scope may not be limited to a church (worship) gathering but in their wider social lives as well - anywhere believers interact with each together.

The speech in ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς to one another implies a form of mutual edification. It is hardly possible to distinguish between the use of ψαλμός, ὕμνος and ᾠδή in biblical tradition (cf. Heb 3.13) since their usages sometimes overlap. The term ψαλμός is employed to refer to OT psalms in the Lukan corpus (Lk 20.42; 24.44; Acts 1.20; 13.33) and to 'Christian' songs (1 Cor 14.26 and

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Beyond the Basics, 637-639) but Gombis insists that the participial clauses express how the filling occurs, speaking, singing, making melody, thanksgiving and submission. Gombis' argument is mainly based on the nature of the negative counterpart of the antithesis but the syntactical structure clearly indicates that they constitute participles of results, indicating the effect.

[217]Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics,* 637-639. These are participles of result.

[218]See Aristotle, *Eud.Eth.* 801a 29 and Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Dictionary,* 1026.

[219]The prepositional phrase could aptly be taken as instrumental of means.

[220]See Muddiman, *Ephesians,* 248, Best, *Ephesians - A Short Commentary*, 267, Best, *Ephesians - ICC*, 502, Fee, *Empowering Presence,* 719 and Schnackenburg, *Ephesians,* 237.

Col 3.16). Ὕμνος implies a hymn of praise, not what has come to be known as traditional hymns in today's church. The word appears only here and Col 3.16 in the NT. The term ᾠδή features here and in Revelation where it denotes some heavenly songs (5.9; 14.3; 15.3). The three words are not meant to refer to different styles or methods of singing since they could be used interchangeably. Moreover, the adjective πνευματικός qualifies all three words in this clause, thereby implying a spiritual character of speech or worship among Spirit-filled people. Thus, the need for seasoned and edifying speech among believers is revisited and characterized as the result of being filled by the Holy Spirit, whom they have already been told would be aggrieved by vulgarity (cf. 4. 25, 29-30).

The second effect is an appropriate act of worship: ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ.[221] The words ᾄδω and ψάλλω (cf. 1 Cor 14.15; Ps 7.18; 9.12; 107. 4 LXX)[222] are not meant to show two forms of music but a hendiadys for a wide variety of singing in praise to their Lord from their hearts (καρδία). The Greeks understood καρδία figuratively as the centre of human personality, will and the seat of emotions (cf. Rom 5.5; 2 Cor 1.22; 3.3; Gal 4.6).[223] The object of praise is the Lord of the church, Jesus Christ. Thus, the wise and Spirit-filled individuals not only edify one another but also show gratitude to their Lord in songs of praise.

The third characteristic of the Spirit-filled wise is an unfading sense of gratitude (5.20. cf. Col 3.15, 17). They are urged to exhibit the spirit of thankfulness regardless of

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[221]See Best, *Ephesians,* 502. He suggests that these are an indication that the participial clauses focus on worship whereas the earlier section of our passage (vv. 15-17) deals with wisdom, but the sentence structure does not give any indication of a shift from the antithesis of wise-fool to a different topic. Moreover, observance to these instructions is not supposed to be confined to a cultic setting.

[222]Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 11, 67; 12:349.

[223]The word carried the literal meaning of heart in physiology when it referred to the human organ.

their circumstances in an early church liturgical fashion.[224] The amount of time they need to give thanks is always (πάντοτε); they should give thanks for everything (ὑπὲρ πάντων); the means by which they should give thanks is 'in the name of Jesus'[225] and the one to whom thanksgiving be ascribed is God the Father (τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί). They are being encouraged to develop a positive attitude that looks beyond all circumstances to reflect and acknowledge the good things God has rendered in thanksgiving.[226] Thankfulness is a virtue in itself.

The final virtue that is supposed to be evident in the Spirit-filled community of the 'wise' is mutual submission (5.21). This particular verse is sometimes detached from this passage to form the opening sentence of the household code. However, the grammatical structure clearly shows that 5.18-24 forms a single sentence and the participial clause in 5.21 also indicates the effect of the 'filling by the Spirit.' Thus, 5.18 - 21 may be set out diagrammatically as follows:

καὶ μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνῳ,
→ ἐν ᾧ ἐστιν ἀσωτία,
ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι,
→ λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς [ἐν] ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς,
→ ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ,
→ εὐχαριστοῦντες πάντοτε ὑπὲρ πάντων ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν
Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί,
→ ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ

What seems to be a problem for English translators would be easily understood if there were no paragraph and verse division, as the readers' text would have been. The Greek construction of verse 22 does not have a verb and therefore draws from the participle

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[224]Cf. Rom 1.9; 1 Cor 1.4; Phil 1.4; 4.4; Col 1.3; 1 Thess 1.2; 2 Thess 1.3, 11; Plm 4; *Did.* 9.2, 3).

[225]For this formula cf. Jn 14.13-14, Acts 4.9-19; Phil 2.9-10.

[226]See Fee, *God Empowering Presence,* 723. Fee explains that "it is doubtful that the 'all things' for which one gives thanks refers to all circumstances of one's life, good or ill, but to the richness of God's blessings that been lavished on us in Christ."

ὑποτασσόμενοι in 5.21 to convey its meaning. As I have indicated, verse 21 and 22 form part of a long sentence that starts from 5.18 to 5.24; the entire household code (5.22-6.9) rests on this antithesis. Ephesians 5.21 therefore links the previous paraenesis to the household code. As Wallace states, it is "a hinge statement that both summarizes the evidence of the Spirit-filling (participle of result) and introduces a *parenthesis* to the argument of the epistle in 5.22-6:9."[227] The participial clause then indicates that mutual submission among members of the believing community will be evidence that they have been Spirit-filled. The verb ὑποτάσσω could mean either voluntary submission or subordination[228] that comes from compulsion, but its appearance here with a reciprocal pronoun (ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις) implies a voluntary and mutual submission to one another (cf. Tit 3.1-2).[229] This humble attitude towards one another is supposed to be exhibited in the Spirit-filled community out of reverence for Christ.[230]

The discussion on the wise-fool contrast could therefore be summed up as follows: (a) It is a call to vigilance and to desist from the ways of the 'unwise' so as to behave 'as the wise' - an indictment on foolish ways and encouragement for a better alternative (wise). (b) It employs a conventional ethical device to differentiate moral integrity from the morally corrupt. The author is therefore using the logic and rhetoric

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[227]Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 659. However, I do not think the verse summarizes the discussion of the Spirit-filling activity but rather is the last participial clause that also concludes the section of the paranesis that is constructed in antithetical patterns.

[228]Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and Social Sciences* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1980), 76. Clark explains the word in terms of subordination but the reciprocal nature of the instruction and appearance of the verb in the middle naturally suggests otherwise.

[229]Ceslas Spicq, "ὑποτάσσω," *TLNT* 3. 426. When the verb appears in the passive voice it often connotes a sense of compulsion (Lk 10:17, 20 is an exception where the middle voice is used for compulsive submission) but the middle usually connotes voluntary submission as we find here and 1 Cor. 14:34-35. Also in Philo, *Dec. 168*; Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2:201.

[230]Cf. Ernst Käsemann, "Ministry and Community in the NT," in *Essays on NT Themes* (trans. W.J. Montague; eds. C. F.D. Moule et al.; London: SCM, 1964), 98.

of his day to demarcate moral boundaries for his readers and to promote demeanour that is meaningful for worship and community living. (c) Moreover, the conduct that needs to be exhibited is couched in a particular cultic framework and also as a pneumatic praxis for ingroup members. The quest to do the 'will of the Lord' (5.17) is contrasted with being foolish, and the call to mutual submission out of reverence for Christ implies Christocentric praxis. The virtues that promote internal cohesion and devotion to God come as a result of being filled by the Spirit (5.18-21). The Lord Jesus and God the Father are the ones to whom praise, spiritual songs and a heartfelt gratitude are due (5.19-20). This theological framework forms the basis and matrix for ethics in the community and sets the readers apart from outsiders. 'Wise ways' are therefore the ways of people whose identity and morality are shaped by this ideological framework. (d) The little attention given to the negative part of the antithesis, namely the fool, and more elaborate attention given to 'wise' conduct implies the primacy of the positive admonitions. There is nothing in this pericope (5.15-21) to suggest a call for isolation or physical separation from society in order to behave as wise. The author seems to be using the wise-fool antithesis to make an ideological distinction and to promote moral excellence in his readership.

2.5 CONCLUSION TO THE ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENTIATION

I have argued that the contrastive patterns form part of the author's rhetorical strategy to demarcate clear identity and moral boundaries between his readers and outsiders. He makes this distinction by categorizing his readers into one group and contrasting their new identity and conduct with those of the outsiders. The ingroup is characterized as one group of people regardless of ethnicity and contrasted with all outsiders, who are

also categorized as one (old, darkness or unwise). This form of categorization is important to enhance positive group identity and a bond of unity among ingroupers.[231] Occasionally, the instruction is personalized to indict the pre-conversion past of the addressees as a platform to underline both their new identity in Christ and transition from their previous way of life. In other words, their previous way of life is synonymous with the present state of unbelievers. It is self-evident that the sharp tone of the contrast between ingroup and outgroup and the depiction of outsiders implies that the author aims at creating an ingroup distinctiveness vis-à-vis outsiders. But could we see this in terms of a realistic social comparison[232] or a call for withdrawal from the outside world? Is social separation from the outside world being required, or are the readers being told to be set apart by exemplary *modus vivendi*? The answers to these questions will be considered in three slants as a summary of the discussion, namely (a) the rhetorical devices, (b) parallels with Greco-Roman conventions and (c) theological perspectives.

Gombis has argued that the antithesis is between "two distinct ways of life: light and darkness, wisdom and folly, the 'new humanity' being renewed and the 'old humanity' heading for destruction."[233] Matera alleges that Ephesians 4.17-24 and 5.6-5.14 describe "two different and opposing kinds of existence."[234] Moreover, Best reads the text as if it were a realistic social comparison given from the perspective of not only the author but also his readers who had developed a negative view of the world as a

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[231]Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 138.

[232]Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 143ff.

[233]Gombis, "Being the Fullness of God in Christ by the Spirit," 265. Also O'Brien. *Ephesians*, 389-390. Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 210, MacDonald, "Asceticism in Colossians and Ephesians," 287 etc.

[234]Matera, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul*, 220.

result of external pressures they faced following their conversion.[235] There is, however, no explicit indication that the author was reacting to pressure from the outside world, writing on behalf of his readers or providing a historical account about the state of affairs with regard to the church's relationship with the outside world. Best insists that these antitheses in Ephesians are typical of the sectarian features in early Christian communities.[236] He explains that,

> The early Christian communities must have seen themselves as very different from those outside them, and those outside them must have regarded these communities as very odd. Christian communities no longer took part in the civic religions of their area, for that would have involved idolatry. They dropped out of various associations with other people that they felt would compromise them; they tended to marry within their own circles. Though there was at this stage no state persecution, individual Christians and groups would have felt harassment from their neighbours and local ruling authorities because of their separatist position (see e.g., Acts 17.5-9; Heb 10.32-33). So not only the common beliefs of Christians but also pressure from outside would have driven them in on themselves and led them to judge the outside world harshly (5.16; 6.13).[237]

It is apparent that Best's 'Two Types of Existence' argues within the framework of historical narrative of the social outlook of the church known to the author, his addressees and even the outsiders. Moreover, I have shown that there is a divergent interpretation about the nature of the antithesis in these passages: some argue that it is a form of comparison between the behavioural patterns of outsiders and insiders, whereas others argue that it is a call for withdrawal from society or introversionist stance. The summary of our analysis will seek to clarify the issue here.

2.5.1 RHETORICAL DEVICE

It is quite evident that some of the prevailing views about the social import of the admonitions couched in binary oppositions (old-new, light-darkness and wise-fool) are

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[235]Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 152-153.
[236]Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 153 & 154.
[237]Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 153.

driven by either an external model (e.g. sect) or a misreading of the paraenetic discourse. In other words, the mere use of such antitheses is not tantamount to a call for social separation or withdrawal, as some will argue. The prescriptive ethical discourse is often confused with an historical account on how its readership related to the wider society. The careful examination of the contrastive patterns in 4.17-24 and 5.6-21 has rather shown that the indictment on outgroupers is part of a rhetorical strategy to underpin the new identity of the readers, its commensurate praxis and the need to take decisive action to foster unity in the church. It is in this vein that they are called (a) to abandon the old way of life and to put on their new identity characterized by true holiness and righteousness; (b) to denounce unfruitful works of darkness in order to exhibit virtues that are characterized as the fruit of light; and (c) to desist from foolish ways, drunkenness and wantonness so as to behave like the wise in time-management, interpersonal relationships and in their devotional life. The rhetoric of differentiation and the dark depiction of the outside world therefore is an accentuation of the difference between ingroupers and outgroupers in the attempt to clarify their new identity in Christ and its befitting praxis. The analysis has shown that the paraenetic discourse does not promote introversionism or withdrawal from society, as has been argued.

Contrary to the claim that this differentiation is a realistic social comparison or a call for withdrawal from society or introversionism, [238] I have argued that there is a consistent rhetoric of differentiation on one hand and the use of shared ethical values as the substance of ethics being promoted. A careful examination of the content of each of

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[238]See Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford: University Press, 1982), 95, 89-120 and Robin Scroggs, "The Earliest Christian Communities as Sectarian Movement" in *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (ed. David. G. Horrell; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 69-91.

the passages has shown that the author does not seek to promote social separation. Differentiation between church and outgroup members is not impermeable but one that lies mainly at the rhetorical and ideological level. Conversely, while the church is likely to maintain the principle of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the church there is no salvation), its members are not urged to withdraw from the rest of society. What Horrell observes in some parts of the undisputed Pauline letters holds true here in Ephesians when he asserts that, "it is in conjunction with the need to foster a sense of distinct *identity* that the language of distinction plays a particular role, while the underlying ethical values are less distinctive and more reflective of widely shared convictions."[239]

2.5.2 GRECO-ROMAN PARALLELS

There is continuity between the values being espoused and the mores of the wider society. The author does not encourage any values that are counter-cultural or at odds with what other moralists espoused. However, this is not to say that all outsiders lived in moral uprightness. The Greco-Roman parallels rather show similarities with ethical ideals as promoted by moral philosophers or religious movements (Jews). The analysis has shown that the author does not make any explicit acknowledgment to conformist objectives. Ideologically, the readers should be set apart from outsiders by virtue of their 'calling', and the values that need to be exhibited are portrayed as 'Christ learned' values or the 'fruit of light' in the Lord, though they are shared by other moralists. The author fails to acknowledge that these values are also shared by other moralists in explicit terms and consistently set his admonitions in a distinctive theological framework. The obvious scenario is that the believers who adhere to the moral

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[239]Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 165

instruction here will not be significantly at odds with the elite who lived up to their moral expectations.[240] It is important to stress that the author's principal objective is to promote internal cohesion in the church – not to prove the uniqueness of the values he promotes.

2.5.3 THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES/MOTIVATIONS

The theological motivations of the instruction form the basis, objective and benchmark for the identity and praxis of the readership. The author appeals to the authority and lordship of Christ in order to call for a positive response to disengage from the lifestyle associated with Gentiles (4.17). The church is said to have been created after the likeness of God to exhibit behaviour that is suitable for God's children (4.24; 5.1-2). The Holy Spirit is noted to be instrumental in the new community renewing the minds of the believers (4.23) and empowering them to edify one another and, as such, members are cautioned not to grieve the Spirit (4.30) but to praise the Lord Jesus and God the Father, and be submissive to one another (5.18b-21). Christology therefore plays a central role in their identity formation and ethical aspirations for the readers. They have learned of Christ the truth (4.20-21) and are light in the sphere where Christ is Lord (5.8) and the giver of light (5.14). As children of light, they are therefore urged to make it their ambition to please the Lord and submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (5.21). Their demeanour must therefore correspond with their new identity in Christ.

To summarize, the antithesis engenders differentiation based on the readers' identity in Christ and set in the framework where unbelievers do not share the privileges of the church and are subject to moral failure and diabolic influence. It is this self-

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[240] *Contra* MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 322.

understanding that is supposed to underlie the radical change from the old way of life to the new. Ephesians indicates that the church is light and is supposed not to indulge in the evil deeds associated with darkness but to function or operate within the realm of darkness in order to expose the evil therein. The contrast between the wise and the unwise is a common categorization of the morally upright and the amoral in a paraenetic discourse. More so, the readers' morality is linked to their new identity and set within the larger eschatological vision of the church where immoral behaviour has eschatological consequences (5.5-6). The rhetoric of differentiation sets the church apart ideologically from outsiders but they are not being urged to withdraw from society. The author rather seeks to promote positive identity and values that will enhance solidarity in the church.

Chapter 3

VIRTUES AND VICES IN THE PARAENESIS OF EPHESIANS

In the previous chapter, we examined the rhetoric of differentiation expressed in terms of the old-new, darkness-light and fool-wise antitheses (4.17-24 and 5.6-21), but 4.25-5.5 was left for a careful analysis of the virtues and vices being espoused. I found it necessary to examine this in a separate chapter here for two reasons. First, 4.25-5.5 constitutes a list of vices and virtues with expansions at various points and it is important that it be examined carefully and thoroughly on its own to be able to assess the nature and validity of the prevailing views of differentiation. Second, there has been no substantial analysis of the content, nature and social strategy of the use of virtues and vices in Ephesians as it relates to the rest of the paraenesis (apart from commentators), and I anticipate that this study will clarify both its nature and its social function in the paraenetic discourse. I hope that by examining the virtues and vices this way, our understanding of differentiation in the letter will be put into proper perspective as it relates to the overall aim of the work.

My primary aim here is to examine the question of whether or not the virtues and vices are designed to differentiate believers from unbelievers; if so how and to what extent? Ephesians 4.25-5.5 is an extension of the 'old-new' antithesis in 4.22-24 and hemmed in by the contrastive patterns that have been discussed in the previous chapter as part of the paraenesis, focusing on specific ethical values that needed to be observed. The notion that the virtues and vices are part of the author's social or ethical comparison and a call to dissociate from outsiders will come under critical scrutiny in this chapter.

In other words, does the author use the device to separate outsiders from insiders? If yes, in what way? Are the virtues being encouraged counter-cultural, suggesting that by observing them the readers will be set apart or look odd, as Best claims?[1] The author's rhetoric of differentiation and his use of ethical values that are shared by contemporary moralists will be discussed.

This task will be undertaken in two segments: First, I will provide an overview of how virtue and vice lists were used by Greek, Latin and Jewish moralists in the era and their influence on NT authors. Second, I will examine how the author uses these virtues and vices and their social implications. The analysis will pay particular attention to whether the author associates vices with outsiders and virtues with believers as a strategy to promote separatism or introversionism. I will also observe the substance of virtues and vices to see if it is any different from that of contemporary moralists. For this reason, I will make comparative analyses where I will constantly show how other moralists addressed similar ethical issues - whether they equally condemned the vices Ephesians condemns or promoted the values/virtues that Ephesians seeks to promote in its readership. The unique features of Ephesians' use of the devices and the extent to which the readers could be set apart by observing these admonitions will be given critical attention. The conclusion will be a summary of key issues in the study as they relate to the author's rhetoric of differentiation.

3.1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE USE OF VIRTUES AND VICES IN MORAL DISCOURSE IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

The relationship between virtue and vice lists in the NT and other Greco-Roman writings has been given some attention in NT scholarship. It is widely believed that the

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[1]Best, *Essays on Ephesians,* 153.

virtues and vices in the NT were adopted from Hellenistic moral philosophy.[2] Perhaps the most significant work in the recent discussion on the subject is J. Daryl Charles' monograph entitled *Virtue Amidst Vice: The Catalogue of Virtues in 2 Peter 1*.[3] Charles provides compelling evidence to show that the catalogue of virtues and vices was a common device in Stoic ethics that later became a popular style in moral instruction.[4] As Reid puts it,

> These virtues and vices became a staple of moral discourse, and the listing of virtues and vices became an accepted and popular literary and rhetorical convention. A list could evoke a picture of an ideal good life set in contrast with a life of bad character and irrational behavior.[5]

Charles and Vögtle before him have shown how this popular ethical reasoning seems to have influenced some Jewish writings, [6] especially those of Philo of Alexandria, 4 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Sibylline Oracles, Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and 3 Apocalypse of Baruch.[7] It is noteworthy that the Stoics were by far the most influential moral philosophers in the NT era.[8] The device was understood to be an effective mechanism to contrast vices with virtues in moral discourse. "Those heeding their advice are considered to be wise and those who cast it aside are ignorant and

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[2]See Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 67-77, 165-170 and Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988),281-283.

[3]J. Daryl Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice: The Catalogue of Virtues in 2 Peter 1* (JSNTSup 150; Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 99-128. See also A. Vögtle, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament* (NTAbh, 16/4-5; Münster: Aschendorff, 1936), 84-107.

[4]Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice*, 112-127. Also Gerard J. Hughes, *Aristotle on Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2001), 190-194.

[5]D. G. Reid, "Vices and Virtues," *DLNTD on CD-ROM.* Version 1.0 2001.

[6]See Philo *Sacr.* 15 – 33; *Leg. All.* 86 – 87; *Virt.* 182; Wis 8.7; 14:22–27; 4 Macc 1.2–4, 18–28; 2.15; *Sib. Or.* 2.254–282; 3.377–80; *T. Reub.* 3.3–8; *T. Levi* 17.11; *T. Iss.* 7:2–6; *3*; Apoc. Bar. 4.17; 8.5; 13.4,6.

[7]Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice*, 119-121, J.D. Charles, "Vice and Virtue Lists," *DNTB* on *CD-ROM.* Version 1.0 2001 and Vögtle, *Die Tugend- und Lasterkataloge*, 106-107.

[8]See Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice*, 105 and also G. Kidd, "Moral Actions and Rules in Stoic Ethics, in *The Stoics* (ed. J. M. Rist; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 247-258 and Mark Morford, *The Roman Philosophers: From the time of Cato to The Death of Marcus Aurelius* (London: Routledge, 2002), 203-208. The entire book of Morford shows the influence of Stoicism in the empire. Quite significant to our time is the influence of Musonius Rufus and his students (e.g. Epictetus, Dio Chrysostom, Euphrates etc.) across the empire.

foolish."[9] The moralists did not have a fixed set of virtues and vices that were constantly used but the composite of each author's list depended on the subject matter.[10] In popular usage, the device was often employed to indict unacceptable moral standards and to promote appropriate behaviour.

The uses of the virtue-vice lists varied. First, a list of virtues could be given in a sequence to accentuate the force of the values being promoted. For example, Plato summarizes a moral discourse by stating that 'the virtues of a man' (praiseworthy conduct) are "justice, temperance, and piety."[11] Plutarch disputes the notion that wealth brings happiness by highlighting virtues that cannot be obtained merely by wealth. "'Yes, if happiness were for sale and to be got by purchase'...But money cannot buy peace of mind, greatness of spirit, serenity, confidence, and self-sufficiency."[12] Second, a vice list is sometimes used to elaborate the negative consequences of misdemeanour or paint a broader picture of the deplorable character of indecency.[13] A classic example is found in Dio Chrysostom's indictment on bad behaviour. He states,

> And here is an indication of the depravity of mankind. If men were to do away with the laws and licence were to be granted *to strike one another, to commit murder, to steal the property of one's neighbours, to commit adultery, to be a footpad,* then we must suppose would be the person who will refrain from these deeds and not, without the slightest scruple or hesitation, be willing to commit all kinds of crimes? For even under present conditions we none the less are living unwittingly with *thieves and kidnappers and adulterers* and joining with them in the activities of citizenship, and in this respect we are no better than the wild beasts; for they too, if they take fright at men or dogs set to guard against them, refrain from thieving.[14]

The third and most common usage is when the device is used as a list or individually to indict immoral behaviour, to promote virtuous living and to highlight the sharp contrast

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[9]Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice*, 118. Cf. Ephesians 5.15-21.
[10]Malherbe, *Moral Exhortations*, 138.
[11]Plato, *Prot.* 325a. Also Plato, *Laches*, 199d.
[12]Plutarch, *Mor.* 523D. LCL.
[13]See Wis. 14.25-26 and Cicero, *Moral Duties*, 35.
[14]Dio Chrysostom, *The Sixty-Ninth Discourse*, 9 (trans. H.L. Crosby).

between the two aspects of life. Plutarch, for instance, contrasts hate and envy with friendship in his discourse on what true friendship entails.[15] The key analytical device of Aristotle's discourse on truth is a contrastive analysis of the characteristics of a truthful and untruthful man.[16] Philo uses this device when he indicates that a soul that is full of passions and vices surrounds itself with "pleasures, appetites, folly, intemperance, injustice" instead of being regenerated to live a new life – "such as prudence, courage, temperance, justice, holiness, piety, and all other virtues and good dispositions."[17] Musonius Rufus, in particular, employed it regularly in his moral discourse.[18] For example, his admonition on how and when children are supposed to obey their parents is couched in terms of the contrasting qualities of obedient and disobedient children. He indicates,

> He only disobeys who disregards and refuses to carry out good and honourable and useful orders. Such is the disobedient man. But the obedient person behaves in just the opposite way and is completely different from him. He would be the kind of man who listens to anyone who counsels what is fitting and follows it voluntarily.[19]

The NT writers seem to have adopted this rhetorical schema for obvious reasons. As a pedagogical device, it was an effective means to meet the logic or understanding of their readers. As Charles puts it,

> Preaching moral uplift in the marketplace, peripatetics found ethical lists to be a practical and effective rhetorical tool. The lists were far from the complicated, convoluted philosophical constructs that had been advanced by 'scholastic' moral philosophers. People saw themselves in these lists – whether vice or virtue. Practical

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[15]Plutarch, *Mor.* 536F.

[16]Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 1127. See also Dio Chrysostom, *The Sixty-Ninth Discourse*, 3-4. Chrysostom discusses the question of what are the most valuable things in life in which he contrasts the drive for prestigious career or professional success with being wise, righteous, caring for others, managing one's household prudently and 'being dear to the gods' as that which he deems to be the true expression of virtue.

[17] Philo, *Rewards*, 159-160. See also *Sacrifices*, 20-23.

[18]See Musonius Rufus, *Frag* 14 and 52. In Fragment 14 Musonius makes a fine contrast between pleasure and pain.

[19]Musonius Rufus, "Must One Obey One's Parents Under all Circumstances?" (XVI.20-30).

> needs of the masses propelled the use and extension of ethical lists in a popular format."[20]

The device was commonly used either as a list of virtues or vices or a contrast of virtues and vices not only among Greek and Latin moralists but also among Jewish writers and Christians in the Greco-Roman world. Betz argues that the NT writers did very little to modify the conventional use of the catalogue of virtues and vices.

> The reason was probably that the catalogues sum up the conventional morality of the time. Christianity was interested in that morality to the extent that Christian existence should not be 'against the conventions' (cf. Gal 5.23b)...The primary function was to make clear that Christian ethical life should roughly conform to the moral conventions of the time.[21]

Later, we shall examine how the device is used along these lines in Ephesians.

The appearances of the lists of virtues and vices in the NT show that it was a common rhetorical device.[22] However, the study of its function in the NT shows that it was utilized in a manner that did not compromise the authors' theological or ecclesial framework. For example, Kruse[23] has made five observations regarding the use of virtues and vices lists in the Pauline letters: First, Paul uses a vice list to characterize the moral state and depravity of unbelievers in Rom 1.29-31 and 1 Cor 5.9-11. Second, it features prominently in the Pauline letters as a general admonition to avoid a set of vices and to practice a set of virtues (cf. Rom 13.13; 1 Cor 6. 9-10; 2 Cor 12.20; Gal 5.19-23; Phil 4.8-9; Col 3.5, 8, 12; Tit 2.3-10; 3. 1-3). Third, it is used in 1 Timothy as a polemic against false teachers and their teaching (1 Tim 1. 3-11; 6.4-5). Fourth, it features in the list of requirements for church leadership in 1 Timothy and Titus (1 Tim 2.22-25; 3.2-

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[20]Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice,* 118-119.

[21]Betz, *Galatians,* 282.

[22]Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice,* 122. There are thirteen virtue lists in 2 Cor 6.6; Gal 5.22-23; Eph 4.23, 32; 5.9; Phil 4.8; Col 3.12; 1 Tim 4.12; 6.11; 2 Tim 2. 22; 3.10; Jas 3.17; 1 Pet 3.8; 2 Pet 1.5-7 and twenty-three vice lists in Mt 15.19; Mk 7.21-22; Rom 1. 29-31; 13.13; 1 Cor 5.10-11; 6.9-10; 2 Cor 6. 9-10; 12. 20-21; Gal 5.19-21; Eph 4.31; 5.3-5; Col 3.5, 8; 1 Tim 1.9-10; 2 Tim 3.2-5; Tit 3.3; Jas 3.15; 1 Pet 2.1; 4.3, 15; Rev 9.21; 21.8; 22.15.

[23]C. G. Kruse, "Virtues and Vices," *DPL* on *CD-ROM.* 1.0 2001.

13; 6.11; Tit 1.6-8). Fifth, a list of virtues and vices was given in an instruction to warn Timothy about what he might encounter and the appropriate conduct to exhibit (2 Tim 3.2-5; 3.10). Kruse also observes that a list of virtues and vices appears in all but one of the letters in the Pauline corpus (1 Thess). In relation to the current discussion, it is important to note that he places Ephesians within the general usage in Paul where the readership is urged to abstain from certain vices so that they might practice virtuous living.

There are two significant observations in relation to our subject matter. First, a similarity between virtues and vices in Ephesians and other Greco-Roman works should not come as a surprise, since the rhetorical strategy was common among moralists in the era. Second, a neutral use of virtues and vices in moral instruction should not be seen as a separation of the morally corrupt from the morally pure, but a rhetorical device to promote good behaviour unless it is otherwise stated in the text. As we proceed to discuss their import in Ephesians, it is important to observe, (a) how they are used within the theological or ecclesiological framework of the letter; (b) whether Ephesians makes a departure from the moral conventions in its milieu or promotes counter-cultural values; and (c) the way the author utilizes the rhetorical device to differentiate his readers from outsiders.

3.2 A STUDY OF VIRTUES AND VICES IN EPHESIANS

The analysis of the text will be divided into three categories, namely ethics of speech, work ethics and ethics of passion. This division follows after the order in which they appear in 4.25-5.5 but rather in a loose way. For example, 'ethics of speech' is treated first because it is the first issue to be raised in the section (4.25) though the subject is

revisited in 4.29 and 5.4. The division into three categories are my own attempt to organize the discussion in a manner that brings related themes under one rubric both to avoid unnecessary repetition and to give a clearer depiction of the author's use of virtues and vices.[24] However, the issues are addressed as closely as possible to the order in which they appear in 4.25-5.5 without any attempt to simplify or generalize them. A crucial part of this task is to examine the virtues and vices in their context with due attention to their social implications.

3.2.1 ETHICS OF SPEECH

The discussion in this section will be divided into three main antitheses with regard to speech, namely 'Truth versus Falsehood,' 'Edifying Speech versus Rotten Speech,' and lastly 'Thanksgiving versus Vulgarity.' The division follows after the way the author draws these contrasts in the textual units, and its relationship to our subject matter will be shown in the course of the discussion.

3.2.1.1 Truth versus Falsehood

The admonition on ethics of speech is significantly dominated by vices that need to be eschewed in the community of believers. There are three virtues (4.25, 29; 5.4) and seven vices (4.25, 29, 31; 5.4) in that regard. In 4.25, ἀλήθεια contrasts with ψεῦδος and provides the reason why it is imperative to speak the truth among the believers. An indictment on ψεῦδος immediately precedes the command to speak the truth, λαλεῖτε

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[24]Aristotle and the Stoics in particular often address ethical issues thematically and while my divisions may resonate some aspects of Stoic ethics, that is not the basis for my division here. As I indicated in the methodology of this study, the textual analysis follows after the units in Ephesians. See Troels Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 45-79.

ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος. Best[25] has suggested that the author expected the readers to refrain from lying completely before moving on to speak the truth to each other, but that seems unlikely for simple pragmatic reasons. There is no textual evidence or hint in support of this conjecture, and it would be unrealistic to assume that the author expected them to follow his instruction like a road map and got people to pledge never to tell lies and made sure they adhered to it before making a commitment to tell the truth. A plausible scenario would be encouragement to speak the truth in anticipation that the readers would adopt the habit and naturally move away from an old habit of lying. The use of contrastive patterns such as this is usually meant to clarify moral boundaries and not to establish the sequence by which moral codes must be followed. Plutarch has noted that it is essential to think about behaviours in terms of their opposite effects.[26] The falsehood-truth contrast should be understood in light of a moral duality where a vice is contrasted with the virtue in order to accentuate the essence of 'truth' in the church. Moreover, the immediate context is 4.22-24 where the old is contrasted with the new to underline their new identity and its commensurate praxis. Thus, truth is brought up again (cf. 4.24) as paramount in the new community.

Ἀλήθεια was a cardinal virtue in antiquity. Minear has shown that the emphasis on the need to abstain from unhealthy speech and to speak the truth was an ideal in society.[27] The appropriate use of words was crucial in ancient cultures which depended on oral speech and where "the intrusion of the intent to deceive pollutes reality at its very source and invokes the ultimate penalties on speakers."[28] It is noteworthy that

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[25]Best, *Ephesians*, 445.
[26]Plutarch, *Mor.* 510. See also Musonius Rufus, IV.20-25.
[27]Paul S. Minear, "Yes or No: The Demand for Honesty in the Early Church," *NovT* 13 (1971): 9.
[28]Minear, "Yes or No: The Demand for Honesty in the Early Church," 13.

ethical ideals as we find in the works of the moralists are not reflective of normal behaviour in the populace. The moralists were, to a large extent, cultural or social critics advocating ideals or values that befit responsible citizens. It is on this note that ἀλήθεια, though a cardinal virtue, may not have been observed by many people in society since we know that lying was widespread.[29] However, the prevalence of falsehood does not mean it was a cherished value, as lying was utterly condemned by the moralists. For example, Aristotle calls for the need to speak the truth and stresses that it is honourable to do so. He states, "for a man who loves truth, and is truthful where nothing is at stake, will still be truthful where something is at stake; he will avoid falsehood as something base, seeing that he avoided it even for its own sake; and such a man is worthy of praise."[30] Aristotle also contrasts truth with falsehood as a rhetorical enforcement.[31] Truth is also a virtue that needs to be evident among the people of God in the LXX.[32] The author does not urge his readers only to speak the truth to one another as a general principle but, in the context of 4.24-25, this is commendable and obligatory in the community that reflects the moral image of God (cf. 5.9). It is essential not only for one's own integrity but also for the benefit of the new community.

The one to whom members have to speak the truth is identified as a neighbour (πλησίον) and the underlying motivation is ὅτι ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη (4.25). The author's concern is for members of the new community and therefore appeals for interdependency and mutuality. The inclusive 'we' (first person plural) will evoke a

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[29]Robinson, *Ephesians*, 110.

[30]Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* IV. 7 (1127a).

[31]See also *T.* Ben 10.3;*T.* Dan 1.3, 5.4; *T* Iss 7. 4. These are parallels of the condemnation of falsehood and the need for truth in the community, but the uncertainties surrounding the dating and nature of the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* casts doubt on its validity for our purposes here, though it is a common practice among commentators to do so. See also The Shepherd of Hermas, *Mandates* 3.

[32]See also Prov 4.24; 6.19;Ps 5.6 (LXX); *T* Dan 2.1, 4; 6.2; 1QS 10.22.

deep sense of belonging and underscore the common identity that the author and his addressees share in Christ (cf. 2. 11-22; 4.1-6). For oneness involves transparency and honesty that are supposed to undermine any form of deception and dissension. The notion that individual conduct is meant to have a positive effect in the community permeates ethics in Ephesians. Thus, ethical instructions are not mere moral necessities to be good or look good for oneself but to conduct oneself in a manner that enhances cordiality and makes positive impact on others in the church. The phrase λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος **μετὰ τοῦ** πλησίον αὐτοῦ recalls Zech 8.16 except for some recognizable changes in the preposition and the article preceding the word πλησίον (λαλεῖτε ἀλήθειαν ἕκαστος **πρὸς τὸν** πλησίον). Both Lindemann[33] and Moritz[34] have taken different stances with regard to whether or not the phrase is a quotation from the LXX. For Lindemann, the similarity of words is purely coincidental from a Jewish author who is familiar with the traditional material, but Moritz argues the contrary, that it is a deliberate quotation. It is likely that the Jewish minority in the readership must have been familiar with the expression, which also conveyed the sense of mutual relations among Gentiles.

Generally, the LXX uses the word πλησίον to imply "men who are members of the covenant, who worship the one God, and who stand under his command."[35] Πλησίον denotes closeness or companionship of people devoted to one God and his precepts. The word also appears in the NT with the nuance it conveys in the LXX. "The close material

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[33]A. Lindemann, *Die Aufhebung der Zeit: Geschichtsverständnis und Eschatologie im Epheserbrief* (Gutersloh: Mohn, 1975), 82.

[34]Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 88. Moritz argues that it is a deliberate quotation from the Septuagint. The editors of the critical text share the position of Moritz when they italicize the clause to indicate a quotation from Zechariah.

[35]Greevan and Fichtner, "Πλησίον," *TDNT* VI, 313.

link with the OT may be seen in the fact that in 12 NT instances of ὁ πλησίον there is an allusion to Lev 19.18, and that once each there is quotation from Zech 8.16 (Eph 4.25) and allusion to Ex 2.12 (Ac 7. 27), while only twice it is used independently (Rom 15.2; Jn 4.12)."[36] Despite the fact that its use in Ephesians shares the sense of fellowship among people of one religious affinity, πλησίον is used slightly differently here. Unlike the Jewish concept of neighbour as a fellow Jew or the Gentile concept of neighbour as a fellow citizen or fellow inhabitant in the Greek *polis*, here πλησίον is restricted to a fellow believer in Christ. In other words, πλησίον is no longer a fellow Jew or a fellow citizen but a fellow believer, who may either be a Jew or a Gentile. This internal scope is further stressed by the author's reason for urging them to speak the truth to the πλησίον, ὅτι ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη. Thus, the inauguration of God's salvific work through Christ has brought about a radical redefinition of the members' self-understanding and their social context – their true neighbours are fellow believers. Moreover, the reference to a fellow believer as a πλησίον transcends and obliterates Jewish believers' perceptions of Gentiles as unclean (cf. 2.11-22) or the Greek attitude towards Barbarians among believers, hence each member deserves to be told the truth. The essence of truth as opposed to falsehood is to foster positive group identity, honesty and interdependence in the church.

3.2.1.2 Edifying versus Rotten Words

The significance of speech to community life is further restated in 4.29-31 where 'rotten speech' is contrasted with 'edifying speech.' Just as in the earlier discussion, the author

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[36]Greevan and Fichtner, "Πλησίον," *TDNT* VI, 316. Cf. Mk 12.28-31; Mt 5.43-48; 22.34-40; Gal 5.14; Rom 13. 8-10.

names the kind of speech that needs to avoided as λόγος σαπρός and proceeds to elaborate on the virtue that needs to be embraced. The expression πᾶς λόγος σαπρός is placed in an emphatic position with the attributive adjective πᾶς to underline every form of word that could be characterized as σαπρός. Literally, σαπρός means rotten, worthless or harmful (cf. Mt 7.17; 13.48) but it is used here metaphorically to denote vulgarity, worthless or destructive speech.[37] This form of speech is prohibited. Elsewhere in the NT (Mt 12. 36), the followers of Jesus are reminded that they will give account of the way they speak in an eschatological day of judgment.

Bad language is sharply contrasted with speech that edifies those who hear (4.29). Their words must build people up and not tear them apart. The word used for edification is οἰκοδομή which literally means building-up or strengthening in architectural parlance.[38] Paul sometimes employs it to urge his readers to encourage or 'build one another up or strengthen one another spiritually' instead of being destructive,[39] as we find here. The objective for this edifying speech is to create a positive impact on hearers in the ingroup (ἵνα δῷ χάριν τοῖς ἀκούουσιν [4.29c]). It is geared towards community-building and not individual sense of piety. The appropriate use of words was a widespread virtue.[40] Plutarch gives a lot of attention to the use and misuse of words in his *Moralia.* He points out that,

> It is proper to intermix and entwine that well-known vigilance and habit of reflection, at the very moment when we are about to speak and words are hurrying to our lips, 'what is this remark that is so pressing and importunate? What object is my tongue panting for? What good will come out of it being said or what ill of its being suppressed.[41]

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[37]Note the imperative of command, ἐκπορεύέσθω, preceded by the negative particle.
[38]Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 11, 59 and 2 Chron 3.2 (LXX).
[39]Cf. Rom 15.2; 1 Cor 14.3, 5, 12, 26; 2 Cor 10.8; 13.10.
[40]See Sir 5.10-14; 18. 15-19; 21.25-26. Also *T Isaac* 4. 14-15
[41]Plutarch, *Mor.* 465.

Good communication builds community, and individual speech must be aimed at the wellbeing of the other and communal harmony. Again, the author uses shared values in contemporary moral philosophy to promote ingroup solidarity.

The author further indicates that failure to abstain from vulgarity would yield negative effect at a spiritual level – grieving the Spirit (4.30). The phrase τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ θεου is an unusual expression in the NT that is rightly taken to refer to the Holy Spirit. Fee explains that the full ascription 'Spirit of God' is "not just a solemn speech, calling attention to the role of the Spirit in ethical life, but emphatic declaration that the *Holy* Spirit is none other than the Spirit *of God.*"[42] The *Holy* Spirit *of God* is personified to have emotional reaction to detrimental speech where the unity of the Spirit is supposed to prevail (4.3). Λυπέω connotes grief, pain or sorrow. The Spirit which could be aggrieved by unwholesome speech is also the one by whom they were sealed for an eschatological redemption, their ultimate inheritance in God (1.13-14). The expression ἡμέραν ἀπολυτρώσεως is a *hapax legomenon* and connotes a future eschatological hope for the church (cf. 1 Thess 5.2; 2 Thess 2.2; 1 Cor 1.8; 5.5; 2 Cor 1.14).[43] The eschatological notion that God would finally consummate his work in human history in a future aeon also resonates in this verse, though the emphasis here primarily rests on the effect of a present action or inaction on the future (cf. 1.10, 14; 2.7; 5.5, 27; 6.8, 13). Thus, "the Spirit is both the sign of ownership and authentication and the empowering presence of God for living to the glory of God until we finally

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[42]Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 714 and Gordon D. Fee, *To What End Exegesis: Essays Textual, Exegetical and Theological* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 266.

[43]See Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 31- 32. Young discusses the syntactical function of ἀπολυτρώσεως in this context and explains it in light of eschatological promise for the Jews. He therefore asserts that, 'the day of redemption' should be understood as 'the day in which God redeems his people.'

arrive at the promised glory which is our own inheritance (Rom 8.17)."[44] There is a spiritual consequence if they fail to comply with the injunction on bad language[45] since inaction on their part may not only create a doorway for diabolic influence (4.27) but also grieve the Holy Spirit.[46]

This admonition has a parallel in the Hebrew Scriptures where the rebellion of the people of God grieves the Holy Spirit (Isa 63.10).[47] The interplay of human responsibility and spiritual activity, especially as it relates to the Holy Spirit, is found in Jewish writings, but I have found no claim of the title 'Holy Spirit' ascribed to a pagan deity or spiritual activity apart from the Judeo-Christian usage. Perhaps Paul Sampley may be right in asserting that, "the idea of grieving the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God is a conventional formulation that has its roots in Jewish ethical advice and admonitions."[48]

3.2.1.3 Thanksgiving versus Vulgarity

The antithesis of bad and good use of words gains more attention by contrasting two vices to a single virtue of speech here. In 5.4, μωρολογία and εὐτραπελία are deemed incompatible with the current status of the believers. This reiterates the previous injunction on vulgarity, but with a strong indication that these are not fitting (ἃ οὐκ

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[44]Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 717. See Fee, *To What End Exegesis*, 268-269 and Robinson, *Ephesians*, 114.

[45]John Rea, *The Holy Spirit in the Bible: All Major Passages about the Spirit* (Maryland: Creation House, 1990), 289-290. He suggests that the Holy Spirit plays a prominent part in the unity of the church and any vice, not only speech, that undermines unity in the church would grieve the Spirit as well.

[46]Darko, "The Role of Spiritual Beings in Relation to Ethics According to Ephesians," 85 -87.

[47]George T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (New York: Paulist, 1970), 226. Montague establishes a connection with what grieves the Spirit in Isaiah and here. Despite the fact we cannot make absolute claim that Israel's sin had to do with speech, he argues that their offence was partially sin of the lip. Also *T.* Iss, 4.40 and Shepherd of Hermas, *Mand.*, 10. ii.

[48]J. Paul Sampley, "Scripture and Tradition in the Community as Seen in Ephesians 4.25ff.," *ST* 2 (1972): 105.

ἀνῆκεν) for the 'beloved children' of God.[49] Μωρολογία is foolish talk in the general sense,[50] and this may include slander, vulgarity or grumbling against authority (cf. 1QS 7.14-18). The term εὐτραπελία appears in Aristotle as a virtue[51] in one instance (implying a middle ground between the one who uses scandalous ways to insult or damage others' reputations and being boorish) and at other times in a negative sense to connote a vice.[52] It is uncertain when the meaning of the word changed from negative to bear a positive connotation, but it is possible that various readers in antiquity derived the meaning from the context in which it appeared.[53] Isocrates uses the word to indicate a form of vulgarity associated with dirty jokes.[54] It is plausible that the appearance of εὐτραπελία here in Ephesians 5.4 with a word that refers to foolish talk on a vice list connotes vulgarity that takes the form of jokes that irritate or provoke others.[55]

The term αἰσχρότης in 5.4 is commonly associated with behaviour or attitude rather than speech. It connotes the sense of filthy conduct, implying any form of conduct that characterizes indecency.[56] Plato suggests that the moral soul could be infected by distortion and αἰσχρότης where pride, luxury and incontinence are rampant.[57] The appearance of the word with two speech related vices in 5.4, however, seems to suggest a form of indecency that may engender vulgar expressions. Two other forms of detrimental speech are condemned in 4.31, namely κραυγή and βλασφημία.

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[49]The clause ἃ οὐκ ἀνῆκεν placed just before the contrastive conjunction connotes a forceful nuance in the injunction just before they are informed about the appropriate thing to do.

[50]Cf. Plutarch, *Mor.* 504b.

[51]Aristotle, *Ethics Eud.*, 1234a.

[52]Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics* 1128 and *Rhetoric*, 1389b.

[53]See P.W. van der Horst, "Is Wittiness UnChristian? A Note on Εὐτραπελία in Ephesians 5:4" in *Miscellanea Neotestamentica Vol.* 2. Ed. T. Baarda, A.F.J. Klijn, and W.C. van Unnik (Leiden: Brill, 1978): 163-177.

[54]Isocrates, *Areopagiticus*, 49. See his positive use of the word in *Antidosis*, 296.

[55]Cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 322-323.

[56]Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Dictionary*, 43.

[57]Plato, *Gorg.*, 525a.

Κραυγή may be rendered a loud cry (Mt 25.6; Lk 1.42), an anxious cry (Heb 5.7; Rev 21.4) or a cry that emerges out of anger in dispute (Acts 23.9 and Ex 12.30 LXX).[58] However, when it appears on a vice list, its nuance is that of clamour or an angry exchange of words in a loud tone. Βλασφημία is slander or insulting talk, and its association with bitterness and anger in 4.31 implies inappropriate language that is used by those who may be angry. Ephesians does not hesitate to condemn all forms of adverse speech as detrimental to the church. In 5.3-4, the author appeals to ingroup sense of propriety, with the phrase ἃ οὐκ ἀνῆκεν, as a motivation for good behaviour. The phrase ἃ οὐκ ἀνῆκεν is not an allusion to wider social norms but to group-specific moral sensibility as it is clearly indicated in the first part of the sentence with the expression καθὼς πρέπει ἁγίοις (5.3). The verb ἀνήκει simply denotes 'what is proper or fitting' (cf. 1 Macc 10.42;11.35; 2 Macc 14.8). The word is used in a similar way in Col 3.18 to refer to that which is fitting, proper or pleasing in the Lord. Thus, the author's point is that the vices aforementioned are incompatible with their new identity as 'saints.'[59]

It is noteworthy that six vices in 5.3-4, including αἰσχρότης, μωρολογία and εὐτραπελία, are contrasted with a single virtue of speech, εὐχαριστία. The word literally translates as thanksgiving or gratitude, and it is a virtue that looks beyond things to grumble or complain about and people to slander, cheat or accuse in order to reflect on the positive aspects that evoke and express gratitude to fellow believers and to God. It is a praiseworthy virtue that contrasts a catalogue of vices in ancient text such as deceit, craftiness, and abominations (cf. 1QS10.21-23). Here, this virtue is supposed to replace

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[58]See Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 449.
[59]Cf. Musonius Rufus, XVI. 20-30.

the diction of those who may use offensive language that is bound to have negative consequences on the community of believers. Philo indicates the significance thereof:

> And Moses very appropriately says that the fruit of education is not only holy but also praised; for every one of the virtues is a holy thing, but most especially is gratitude (εὐχαριστία) holy...Having learnt therefore that there is only one employment possible for us of all the things that seem to contribute to the honour of God, namely the display of gratitude (εὐχαριστία).[60]

Epictetus shows the essence of εὐχαριστία in interpersonal relationships as a virtue.[61] Seneca treats ungratefulness as a vice and indicates that, "among all our many and great vices, none is so common as ingratitude."[62] Εὐχαριστία when directed to God duly summarizes the attitude and language that emerges from sober reflection of what God has done (i.e. creation or salvation) and the status of the believer at the moment in light of God's work in their lives. The prevalence of thankfulness in the ingroup will also yield corporate edification. However, it is uncertain whether εὐχαριστία here is meant to be expressed to God or to fellow believers. The ambiguity leaves it open to either or both readings.

The virtues and vices with regard to speech were clearly shared by contemporary moralists despite the lack of acknowledgement.[63] The author condemns bad use of words as unacceptable, like other moralists, and encourages his readers to speak the truth, to use words that will edify the community. In light of the author's rhetorical framework and the wider context of ethics in the letter, his condemnation of vices has implicit reference to the deeds of outsiders while the values he promotes clearly have

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[60]Philo, *Plant.*, 126 & 131.

[61]Epictetus, *Diss.* I.6.1ff, IV.4.14ff, 29-32.

[62]Seneca, *On Benefits* I.1.

[63]See Pedersen, *Paul and Stoics,* 45-177. These were common among Stoics, the most influential philosophical school in New Testament times, but as Pedersen shows Greek and Jewish ethical values overlap significantly in the Pauline corpus.

intra-church focus. For the addressees, Ephesians insists that these virtues are imperative because of who they are and the new community to which they belong.

3.2.2 WORK ETHICS

The naming of this section as 'work ethics' is an attempt to discuss a brief instruction in Ephesians regarding what should characterize the believers' attitude towards work. The admonition could be considered in three parts: as (a) a prohibition of theft, (b) the need for hard work and honest labour and (c) the reason to develop the attitude. It reads: ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω, μᾶλλον δὲ κοπιάτω ἐργαζόμενος ταῖς [ἰδίαις] χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἵνα ἔχῃ μεταδιδόναι τῷ χρείαν ἔχοντι (4.28). First, the prohibition is direct and personalized to call for cessation of theft. The expression μηκέτι κλεπτέτω should not be taken to imply that the author is calling for an end to some prevailing theft crime that has come to his notice, as it is probably another way of saying 'just in case someone was stealing, this should not happen in the new community.' Best has argued that the injunction must have had the background of some of the readers' pre-Christian past in view, where they had engaged in stealing and may still have the tendency to do so in the church.[64] He partially acknowledges that the author does not appear to be addressing a prevailing issue in this particular context yet he insists that the author would be aware of some members of such background.[65] However, there is no evidence, implicit or explicit, in the text to support his claim. We may rather deduce a hypothetical scenario where individuals who must have accrued wealth through theft or dubious means are

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[64]Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 181-182 and Best, *Ephesians*, 453. See also G.B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 82.

[65]Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 182.

being urged to earn their living with honest labour.[66] In any case, stealing was endemic in Greco-Roman societies and would have been detrimental to any social order, whether the church or otherwise. Muddiman may therefore be right in noting that 4.28 is a 'general moral dictum'[67] which does not address any specific situation. Moreover, the use of the antithesis to demarcate moral boundaries is prominent in Ephesians, and the rhetorical strategy is self-evident in the way it condemns stealing in direct and strong terms and then stresses the essence of hard work as a virtue.[68] It was also typical in the early church to condemn stealing, and the readers of Ephesians are only being urged to follow suit in that regard.[69]

The condemnation of theft was a prominent feature in Greco-Roman moral discourse[70] and considered in the same degree of offence as murder and robbery.[71] Plato argues that there is no justification even to steal from one's enemy in order to help a friend.[72] He therefore names stealing on a list of serious offences with kidnapping and temple-robbery.[73] Cicero also includes theft on his vice list with robbery and adultery.[74] Similarly, stealing was condemned in Jewish communities.[75] Generally, theft was deemed destructive to peaceful co-existence in society. Ephesians reiterates this and condemns the act as unhelpful in the community of believers as well.

Second, the shameful habit of stealing is contrasted with an honourable act of hard work. The word κοπιάω appearing in the imperative denotes hard work or labour

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[66]Barth, *Ephesians*, 515.
[67]Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 226.
[68]*Contra* Best. *Essays on Ephesians*, 179-188.
[69]Mk 10.19; Lk 18.20; Rom 2.21; 13.9; 1 Cor 6.10.
[70]Cf. Epictetus 3. 8.10ff; Xenophon. *Anab* 7.6.41; Herodotus I. 186.3.
[71]*TDNT* III, 754 and also Epictetus, *Diss.* III. 7, 13.
[72]Plato, *Rep.*, 1: 334b.
[73]Plato, *Rep.* 1: 344b.
[74]Cicero, *On Moral Duties*, 35.
[75]Cf. Philo, *Decalogue* 135, 138. Also Ex 20.15; Deut 5.19; Isa 1.23, 29; Jer 7.9; Lev 19.11.

(Rom 16.6,12) whereas ἐργάζομαι in 4.28 features as a participle of manner, qualifying the manner of labour in question. Sometimes ἐργάζομαι refers to manual work in the NT,[76] whereas in other occasions it refers to religious work.[77] The context here suggests manual work and the expression ἐργαζόμενος ταῖς [ἰδίαις] χερσὶν (working with your own hand) could be read figuratively to mean an honourable work – earning one's own living. Elsewhere, Paul affirms the value of earning one's living through hard work and the reward of hard work (1 Cor 4.12; 1 Thess 2.9; 2 Thess 3.8). Thus, instead of using the hand to steal, it must be used to do honest work.

Thirdly, the purpose clause provides the reason for honest and hard work as ἵνα ἔχῃ μεταδιδόναι τῷ χρείαν ἔχοντι. It is not meant to fulfil the mere interest of a workaholic or for the accumulation of wealth but so that those in need might be helped (cf. Gal 6.9-10). Other-regard and communal welfare is the underlying motivation for hard work. Stealing is a trait of selfishness and greed whereas generosity is motivated by a sense of otherness and genuine care for the needy. Hard work and generosity feature quite frequently in Greco-Roman literature as attributes that command respect.[78] Seneca devotes a substantial part of his *Moral Essays* (*On Benefits*) to exhaustive discussion on various aspects of giving and receiving. He stresses that it is a noble thing to give to those who are not able to reciprocate (the needy). For Seneca, generosity that is selfless, with no intention to gain credit for oneself, is a virtue.[79] He contends for the

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[76]1 Cor 4.12; 2 Tim 2.6; 1 Thess 1.3; 2.9; 2 Thess 3.8.

[77]1 Cor 15.10; Gal 4.11; Phil 2.16; 1 Thess 5.12; 1 Tim 4.10; 5.17.

[78]See Cicero, *On Moral Duties,* 14; Epictetus, Diss I, 16. 16-17; 3:26. 6-7, Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 7. 112, 124-125.

[79]Seneca, *On Benefits* IV.3.1-2. Also *On Benefits* II.11.2. Seneca's elaborate discourse of benefits addresses practical issues that could discourage giving and advises his readers to exhibit the virtue since all human beings need the other, one way or another. His principles of giving are very similar to what one finds in the biblical concept of giving to the needy.

need to encourage generosity and to make laws against abusive receivers so as to keep the spirit of giving alive in society. He asserts that, "we need to be taught to give willingly, to receive willingly, to return willingly...the one should be taught to make no record of the amount, the other to feel indebted for more than the amount."[80] It is also a commendable virtue in both Jewish and Christian literature.[81] Pseudo-Phocylides links hard work to generosity when he states that, "you must fill your hand (make it full). Give alms to the needy."[82] He urges his readers to abstain from stealing and work hard in the manner we find here in Ephesians: "Work hard so that you can live from your own means; for every idle man lives from what his hands can steal."[83] However, Cicero argues that in a society where honour and shame are an unwritten law of propriety, generosity should not be driven by eagerness for honour but conducted in honesty and fairness. He notes,

> The last principle is the foundation of justice, the standard by which acts of kindness must be measured. If we offer to another under the guise of kindness what will do him harm, we are not to be accounted beneficent or liberal men but dangerous hypocrites; and if we harm one man in order to be liberal to another we are quite unjust as if we were to appropriate our neighbour's goods. Many men, however, especially if they are ambitious of honour and glory, lavish on one the spoils of another, expecting to obtain credit as benefactors, if only they enrich their friends by fair means or by foul. Such conduct is absolutely opposed to duty. Let us therefore remember to practise that kind of liberality which is beneficial to our friends and injurious to no one.[84]

Sharing and generosity with the view to meet the needs of the needy was a tradition in the early church.[85] Ideally, the church, Jews and Gentiles in the Greco-Roman world, would acknowledge that theft has negative effect on human relations and society at

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[80]Seneca, *On Benefits* I. 4.2-4.

[81]Cf. Ex 20.9; Ps 104.23; Prov 6.6; 10.4; 28; Ecclus 7.17; 1 Cor 4.12; 1 Thess 4.11-12; 2 Thess 3.6-12.

[82]Pseudo –Phocylides, 23. Also Didache 3.5; 4:5-8.

[83]Pseudo-Phocylides, 153-154. Also *T* Zeb. 6. 1- 6. Zebulon shows a practical demonstration of this admonition where one uses a God-given wisdom and insight to fish in order to share his catch with his father's household, strangers, the sick and those in need.

[84]Cicero, *On Moral Duties,* 14.

[85]Lk 6.29-36; Acts 2.45; 4.32-5.11; 6.1-7; Rom 15.26-27; 2 Cor 8-9; Gal 2.10.

large, whereas generosity is a practical way to express love and care.[86] The injunction on stealing, apart from being a rhetorical device to encourage honest labour, echoes the ideal in moral philosophy of the era. Members of the church are urged to do honest and hard work so that instead of stealing from their fellow members, they would rather be generous to the needy among them. Again, the object of generosity is their fellow members in need.

3.2.3 ETHICS OF PASSION

We discuss the 'Ethics of Passion' under four sub-divisions, namely (a) anger, (b) greed, (c) love and (d) sexual ethics. As indicated above, this division is my own attempt to make it possible to discuss these ethical issues thematically and in the order in which they appear in the text. All four segments will be discussed in light of the overall differentiation being made in the paraenesis. Greed or covetousness is discussed in this section as a strong passion or 'intense desire or cravings for more,' though it usually appears with sexual sins in Ephesians (see below).

3.2.3.1 Anger

The instruction on anger in Ephesians has two aspects to it: The first part is an instruction that places some limits on how anger is expressed (4.26-27) and the second is an outright injunction on various forms of anger (4.30-31). A first injunction on anger is issued in 4.26 with double imperative - ὀργίζεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε. It is likely that the statement draws from the opening clause in Psalm 4.5 (LXX), which reads ὀργίζεσθε καὶ μὴ ἁμαρτάνετε. The psalmist uses the expression in the context of personal

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[86]Cf. Lk 6.29, 36; Acts 2.45; 4.32-5.11; 6.1-7; 2 Cor 8.1-15; 9.6-12.

reflection where the individual is entreated not to grumble but to trust God who brings satisfaction and gladness to the heart. Ephesians, however, uses it as an opening statement of instruction on anger management (4.26-27). Moreover, while the clause may be considered as a simple quotation, it could also be an ethical maxim or a statement that needs to be taken literally and applied responsibly.

The syntactical function of ὀργίζεσθε has been a debated matter. For example, Lincoln translates it as conditional clause to read 'if you are angry' and not as a command that should read 'be angry.' He explains that 4.26 should be understood as indicating that "anger should be avoided at all cost, but if for whatever reason, you do get angry, then refuse to indulge such anger so that you do not sin."[87] Lincoln further claims that this is compatible with the instruction on anger in Jas 1.19-20. Brooks and Winberry, however, reiterate the popular understanding of ὀργίζεσθε as an imperative of concession (cf. Jn 7.52), "*although you may be angry* (preceding the imperative of command) you must not sin."[88] In this vein, anger is bound to occur and should be allowed, but the limit is hereby placed on the degree to which one may express it. Wallace has subsequently dismissed the views aforementioned and argues in favour of imperative of command.[89] He asserts that both imperatives issue direct command as

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[87]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 301.

[88]James A. Brooks and Carlton L. Winberry, *Syntax of NTGreek* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1979), 129-130. Also Arthur G. Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon – NIBC* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1984), 252.

[89]Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 491-492. Comprehensive discussion of Wallace's view can be seen in Daniel B. Wallace, " Ὀργίζεσθε in Ephesians 4.26: Command or Condition?," *CTR* 3 (1989): 353-372.

they stand in the text and adds that 4.26b provides further clarification that the readers are commanded or permitted to be angry but it must rather be short lived.[90]

In my opinion, the lack of any definite conclusion on the syntax of ὀργίζεσθε should not affect our understanding, since the wider context indicates a prohibition of any form of anger that would disturb harmony in the church (cf. Prov 15.1, 18; 22.24; 29.8, 11; Eccl 7.9). In order words, self-control is paramount, and no reason for anger could warrant an extreme expression thereof, specifically whatever could be deemed sinful. The Greek moralists (e.g. Plutarch) and the Hebrew tradition (cf. Deut 24.15, *T* Dan 6.8) did not condemn anger in its entirety but rather established limits on its expression as we find here. The moral issue with regard to anger was often the extent to which one harbours anger and its effects on others. Aristotle argues that it is rather honourable to be angry for a good cause and exercise what he calls 'good temper.'[91] Thus, "the man who is angry at the right things and with the right people, and, further, as he ought, when he ought and as long as he ought, is praised."[92] However, Aristotle similarly condemns an extreme expression of anger in unambiguous terms. He asserts, "to good temper we oppose the excesses rather than the defect; for not only is it commoner since revenge is human, but bad tempered people are worse to live with."[93] Later, Plutarch takes a similar position on anger and reiterates the need to exercise 'righteous indignation'[94] in order to stop the persistence of evil in society. He therefore

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[90]Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 492. Cf. Hermann Kleinknecht, J. Fichtner, G. Stahlin, *Wrath: Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Worterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1964) 79.

[91]Plutarch, *Mor.*, 456, 457 and Aristotle. *Nic. Ethics*, IV. 5.

[92]Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics* IV.5, 1125b.

[93]Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics* IV. 5, 1126a.

[94]Plutarch, *Mor*, 463E.

cautions against the consequences of unconstrained anger, especially as it relates to speech.

> For unmixed wine produces nothing so intemperate and odious as anger does: words flown with wine go well with laughter and sport, but those which spring from anger are mixed with gall… when anger swells within the breast, restrain the idly barking tongue.[95]

Demosthenes also subscribes to the idea that moral anger, δικάια ὀργή, is necessary to curb the pursuit of the wicked.[96] The opening statement of the admonition on anger, as we have seen, does not depart from the stance of other moralists. However, this notion of emotional comportment is specifically meant to promote decency in the ingroup, the church.

3.2.3.2 Time Limit on Anger

Ephesians further sets limits on the expression of or the harbour of anger: ὁ ἥλιος μὴ ἐπιδυέτω ἐπὶ [τῷ] παροργισμῷ[97] ὑμῶν. While an expression of excessive anger may be deemed irrational behaviour by other moralists,[98] Ephesians views it as sin in light of its religious framework. The language used for the injunction on time limit was known in Greek and Jewish moral conventions. In Deut 24.15, the sunset clause is used as the time limit for which wages should be paid. Among Greeks, the Pythagoreans and Plutarch in particular used the expression to set a time limit for anger and reconciliation. Plutarch asserts that, "we should next pattern ourselves after the Pythagoreans, who, though related not at all by birth, yet sharing a common discipline, if ever they were led

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[95]Plutarch, *Mor.* 456E. See also Cicero, *On Moral Duties,* 38 where he advises orators to 'assume the appearance of anger' when addressing serious matters but avoid being angry in the act since no good advice can emerge from anger.

[96]Demosthenes, *Orations,* 16.19.

[97]The word used for anger here is παροργισμός and it is *hapax legomenon* in the NT. In classical Greek it connotes the cause of anger and often translates as 'provocation' (see Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon,* 1343 and also Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon,* 629).

[98]See Seneca, *De Ira,* I.

by anger into recrimination, never let the sun go down before they joined right hands, embraced each other, and were reconciled."[99] The 'sunset' phraseology could either be taken literally or figuratively, but the crux of the matter is that anger must be short-lived. As Eadie puts it, "the day of anger should be the day of reconciliation. It is to be but a brief emotion, slowly excited and very soon dismissed."[100] And in whatever form it may take, the readers are commanded to acquiesce in the fact that (a) anger must not degenerate into sinful behaviour and (b) it should not be prolonged.

3.2.3.3 Anger as a Means of Diabolic Influence

While the sinful consequence of anger may suggest its negative effect on other believers and prolonged anger may cause damage to the individual involved, there is also a spiritual consequence on the one who keeps anger unchecked. This is expressed in 4.27, μηδὲ δίδοτε τόπον τῷ διαβόλῳ. Structurally, this sentence forms part of the previous verse that addresses anger. The negative particle μηδέ stands in an emphatic position and immediately precedes the imperative (δίδοτε) to underscore the force of the injunction. Τόπος carries a wide range of meaning that includes place, foot-hold, opportunity, vicinity, geographical position, place in a room, sphere, chance or room in the sense of space for operation.[101] Generally, the meaning suggests a form of space or sphere where an activity occurs. In this context, the imperatival clause calls the readers collectively (second person plural) to make a decisive effort to refrain from prolonged anger since it may provide a τόπος for diabolic influence. This suggests a sort of space, sphere or operational jurisdiction that is currently not accessible to diabolic forces but

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[99]Plutarch, *Mor*, 488C.

[100]Eadie, *Ephesians*, 349.

[101]See Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1806. They provide comprehensive references to the use of the word in classical Greek literature.

which could be susceptible to their influence as a result of prolonged anger or immoral deeds.

There is a consensus in modern scholarship that διάβολος in 4.27 is a personal evil spiritual force synonymous with the devil. The devil is not blamed or noted as the source of anger but moral failure or lack of self-restraint is that which could give him access to exert his influence. The imperative then calls for human activity or individual responsibility to resist negative spiritual influence. The effect of moral deeds therefore transcends the social dimension of life to include a spiritual component where one's attitude in relation to anger could trigger or restrict diabolic influence. However, it is not clear whether the influence of the devil takes place in the individual's life or in the community as a whole, but it is apparent that solidarity in the community would be affected somehow if a member fell prey to diabolic influence and expresses anger inappropriately – whatever form it might take. The notion of diabolic influence on human activity is associated with outsiders elsewhere in the letter (2.1-3), and here the believers are being cautioned to the effect that uncontrolled anger on their part will also make them susceptible to the undesirable plight of outsiders in relation to the powers.

As noted earlier, both Jews and Greeks condemned uncontrolled anger.[102] Anger is not contrasted in 4.26-27 with any virtue, perhaps due to the notion that there is good and bad anger. While the author may characterize the values he promotes as 'Christ learned' virtues, it is clear that he utilizes shared ethical values in relation to anger in his discourse. The injunction on anger here is placed on extreme expressions thereof, which is bound to be inimical to community life. Good temper for good reason within a

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[102]Cf. Ecclus 1.21-22; 27.30; Prov 15.1, 18; 22.24; 29.8, 11; *T* Dan 3.5-6, 4.7, 5.1. The *T* Dan links anger to falsehood and diabolic influence.

reasonable limit may be appropriate, but believers have to observe that anger (a) could lead to sin, (b) should not be prolonged, and (c) could pave the way for diabolic influence.

3.2.3.4 Injunction on Unrestrained Anger

The second admonition characterizes πικρία, θυμός, ὀργή and κραυγή as vices that need to be avoided in the community (4.31). The verb αἴρω (take away) requires individual responsibility to do away with the sorts of anger being named. The expression πᾶσα πικρία in 4.31 is comprehensive, and it is placed in an emphatic position to underline all forms of conduct associated with πικρία. Πικρία appears both in classical and *koine* Greek to connote bitterness that emerges from grief, disappointment, hate and anger. It features thirty times in the Septuagint, four times in the NT and in Philo and Josephus with the same meaning.[103] Θυμός and ὀργή appear in the Septuagint as synonyms for anger and are sometimes used interchangeably. However, both words are used occasionally to express different forms of anger. 'Οργή sometimes denotes "a quite definite reaction of the human soul" whereas θυμός may be used to convey a sense of "wrath as being the manifestation, with the most violent external effect."[104]

> Whilst on the one hand both concepts stand side by side and complete each other, yet on the other hand ὀργή differs from θυμός because it has the characteristic of being directed to an object, namely vengeance or punishment with significant intention. 'Οργή which already in tragedy seeks to preserve something that is recognized to be right, became then in the national life of later times the characteristic and legitimate attitude of the judge who has to avenge the wrong.[105]

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[103]'Πικρία' in *NIDNTT* on CD-ROM Version 5.1 2004 and Warren C. Trenchard, *Complete Vocabulary Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 89.

[104]Kleinknecht, *Wrath*, 1.

[105]Kleinknecht, *Wrath*, 1-2.

I have already discussed κραυγή in the section on 'speech ethics' since it takes the form of 'angry shouting' and exchange of words that emerge from anger.

Thus, a well managed anger is deemed acceptable in the moral conventions of antiquity, but excessive and destructive forms of anger are condemned not only in Ephesians but also by the Jewish and Greek moralists. However, while the scope of reference for other moralists may be the *polis* or a Jewish community, Ephesians condemns this attitude as detrimental for concord in the church. The admonition proceeds to establish a contrast with more desirable passions: γίνεσθε [δὲ] εἰς ἀλλήλους χρηστοί, εὔσπλαγχνοι, χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς, καθὼς καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν (4.32). The first item on the list is also a cardinal virtue among Greeks and Jews. Χρηστός is a relational term denoting honesty, worthiness, and upright personality in one's dealings with others thereby implying 'good character,' 'moral integrity' and 'humane disposition.' "When someone is called χρηστός in relation to others (as we find here in the reflexive pronoun ἀλλήλους), the word has a special sense of kind, gentle, friendly."[106] Philo places χρηστός among his catalogue of virtues exemplified in those who worship God vis-à-vis the destructive traits in those who forsake the Laws.[107] What is being required of the believers then is a humane and gentle attitude towards one another. The term εὔσπλαγχνος denotes tenderheartedness vis-à-vis outrage or hardheartedness. The last requirement on this list is χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς, an expression that translates as 'forgiving one another.' In classical Greek this would imply an act of favour towards the other – to the giver it would be an act of kindness but to the receiver

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[106] *TDNT* IX, 484. Also 483-485.
[107] Philo, *Virt*, 182.

a favour.[108] However, the motivation here, καθὼς καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν, re-establishes it as a commendable trait particularly to those who are in Christ. The grace of God that is expressed in the death of Christ for the forgiveness of sins serves as a model for the followers of Christ (cf. 2.1-10). They are urged to recall God's gracious act of forgiveness towards them as the basis for which they ought to forgive one another in comparable terms (cf. Mt 6.12, 14; 18.21-35).[109] Cicero indicates that the ability to forgive is an honourable virtue. As he puts it, "there is nothing more praiseworthy, nothing more becoming in a great and noble character than a forgiving, forbearing spirit."[110] Thus, anger is contrasted with kindness, tenderheartedness and forgiveness as befitting traits for inter-personal relations. Clearly, the author condemns all forms of pernicious anger and indicts or seeks to uproot any remnant of such negative passion. The repetition of one issue, such as anger, with a variety of words also appears in Greek literature as a form of rhetorical reinforcement[111] despite the fact that all three words may be used to express different forms of anger.[112]

3.2.3.5 Greed

Πλεονεξία is the only vice in Ephesians that is repeated three times (4.19; 5.3, 5). The term πλεονεξία is associated with the readers' pre-conversion past and features among vices that are inappropriate to even name among the saints (5.3). It is a cardinal vice among Jews[113] and Greeks[114] who deemed it detrimental to good interpersonal

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[108]See Liddell and Scott, *Greek–English Lexicon,* 1978-1979.
[109]Cf. *T* Zeb. 7.2; 8.1.
[110]Cicero, *On Moral Duties,* 25.
[111]Chrysippus, *frag.* 395, cf. 394, 396f; Seneca, *De Ira* 1.4. Also *Dio Chrysostom, Oration* 17:1-11.
[112]Chrysippus, *frag* 395; Diog. Laertius 7.113f; Seneca, *De Ira* 2.36.
[113]Philo, *De Vita Mosis,* I. 56.

relationships. Πλεονεξία is the antonym of liberality and denotes a desire to have more for oneself, sometimes expressed in compulsiveness and violence (cf. Rom 1.29; 1Thess. 2.5), and is appropriately translated as 'greed, covetousness or avarice.' According to Dio Chrysostom, "greed is not only the greatest evil to a man himself, but it injures his neighbours as well. And so no one pities, forsooth, the covetous man (πλεονέκης) or cares to instruct him, but all shun him and regard him as their enemy."[115] He further indicates that πλεονεξία is harmful even to τοῖς θείοις (divine beings).[116] Plutarch similarly condemns the attitude, especially as it relates to the acquisition of wealth.[117] He indicates that the cravings of greed (πλεονεξία) do not subside even by the acquisition of immense gold or silver.[118] It is for this reason that he states that πλεονεξία is "like an oppressive and vexatious mistress it compels us to make money but forbids the use of it, and arouses the desire but cheats us of the pleasure."[119]

Pseudo-Phocylides also underlines the need to exhibit contentment and avoid greediness.[120] Philo condemns πλεονεξία[121] as an incurable passion that robs people of a happy life.[122] However, it was believed that this negative passion could be overcome by the study of moral philosophy, hence the suggestion that both men and woman study

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[114]W. B. Sedgwick, "Covetousness and the Sexual Sins in the New Testament," *ET* 36 (1924/25): 478-479.

[115]Dio Chrysostom, *On Covetousness*, 17. 7-8. Also Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* VI, 24-26. Cicero places greediness among the cardinal vices and calls it a spiritual sickness.

[116]Dio Chrysostom, *On Covetousness*, 17.11.

[117]Plutarch, *Mor.* 560.

[118] Plutarch, *Mor.*, 523D. See also S. Laukamm, "Das Sittenbild des Artemidor von Ephesus," *Angelos*, 3 (1930), 32-71. Laukamm discusses the relationship between poverty and greed in light of the religious context of Ephesus (p. 56).

[119]Plutarch, *Mor.* 525B

[120]Pseudo-Phocylides, 5, 63, 35, 42, 62, 137.

[121]Philo, *Spec. Leg.* I. 278, *Decal*, 155, *Vit Cont.*, 2.

[122]Philo, *Spec. Leg.* IV.5 and *Vit. Mos.* II.186

philosophy as a moral requirement.[123] Philo contrasts πλεονεξία with δικαιοσύνη in a list of virtue and vices.[124] For him, "πλεονεξία disrupts the cosmos, the harmonious order in man, or in his life with others, or in both."[125] The vice is widely condemned in the early church.[126] As I have indicated earlier, all three appearances of the word in Ephesians appear in a list of sexual sins (4.19; 5.3; 5.5). Sedgwick claims that the appearance of "πλεονεξία and sensuality is sufficiently accounted for by history; but there is perhaps a psychological connexion too (cf. Jas 4.1-4)."[127] Thus, the indictment on πλεονεξία in Ephesians is shared by other Greco-Roman moralists.

3.2.3.6 Love

The passion of love is given special attention when it is brought up in the paraenesis. Sometimes it is placed within a shared religious experience of the readers in order to underline the essence thereof. For example, the instruction for love in 5.1-2 is encased in the identity of the believers as τέκνα ἀγαπητά of God, who are called to imitate their father by walking in the manner of love that he has demonstrated through the sacrificial work of Christ. In other words, love is not just necessary for communal harmony but its import is intertwined with the nature of who they are and the suitable deportment that befits such a privileged status. The instruction in 5.1-2 therefore deserves further examination in order to clarify the accent on love.

First, this is the only place in the NT that believers are called explicitly to imitate God, μιμηταὶ τοῦ θεοῦ. However, the notion of 'imitating God' does not presume a

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[123]*TDNT VI,* 268-269. Also Lutz, "Musonius Rufus," 39-43.
[124]Philo, *Prob,* 159.
[125]Delling, "Πλεονέκτης, πλεονεκτέω, πλεονεξία," *TDNT,* VI.270.
[126]1 Cor 5.10; Col 3.5; Heb 13.4, 5; 2 Pet 2.14.
[127]Sedgwick, "Covetousness and the Sexual Sins in the New Testament," 479.

religious experience where devotees see God visibly in order to mimic his actions but rather the character or attributes of God as they have experienced or heard about him. The author had stated earlier that their new identity is created after the likeness of God or the moral image of God (4.24) and here they are instructed to act accordingly. This concept is also found in Philo, where 'imitation of God' implies the imitation of the virtuous qualities of God.[128] The language of Philo shows more resemblance with Ephesians when he states that, "for what one of the men of old aptly said is true, that human beings do nothing more akin to God than showing kindness [παραπλήσιον οὐδὲν ἄνθρωποι θεῷ δρῶσιν ἢ χαριζόμενοι]. For what greater good can there be than they should imitate God [μιμεῖσθαι θεόν]…"[129] Hellenistic literature shows a similar concept in relation to the gods. "Pythagoras said that the two best gifts of the gods to human beings were speaking the truth and showing kindness, and he added that both resembled the works of the gods."[130] When he was asked to describe the character of God, "Demosthenes said it is 'showing kindness and speaking the truth."[131] For Musonius Rufus, human beings ought to imitate God for the simple reason that he made them and possesses qualities that are good for humans to emulate. He asserts that,

> In general, of all creatures on earth man alone resembles God and has the same virtues as He has, since we can imagine nothing even in the gods better than prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. Therefore, as God, through the possession of these virtues, is unconquered by pleasure or greed, is superior to desire, envy, and jealousy; is high

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[128]Philo, *Spec Leg.* 4.72ff. See also Plato, *Theaetetus* 176A-B and Pseudo-Isocrates, *Demonicus* 9-11. For Plato, this can be actualized when there is a flight of the soul from the corrupt world. He asserts, "a man becomes like God when he becomes just and pure, with understanding (*Theateus* 176A-B)."

[129]Philo, *Spec.* 4.72-73. I am citing from Robert A. Wilds, "Be Imitators of God:' Discipleship in Ephesians" in *Discipleship of the New Testament.* Ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 137. See also Philo, *Fug.* 63.

[130]Aelian, *Varia Historia* 12.59. I am citing Wilds, "Be Imitators of God,' 143. There are two main things to observe in this statement: (a) that Gentile gods also give gifts or help people to be kind and truthful, and (b) that the virtues of truth and kindness are part of the virtues being addressed here in Ephesians.

[131]Demosthenes, *Violarium,* 189, cited by Wilds, "Be Imitators of God,' 143.

> minded, beneficent, and kindly (for such is our conception of God), so also man in the image of Him, when living in accord with nature, should be thought of as being like Him, and being enviable, he would forthwith be happy, for we envy none but the happy.[132]

The ethical ideal of imitating a supreme spiritual being, either God or gods, existed both among Jews and Greeks to underpin the significance of high moral standards and a higher sense of duty; noncompliance, on the other hand, may attract divine chastisement. For Ephesians, the imitation of the moral image of God is at the core of the readers' new identity in Christ. They are created in *imago Dei* to bear the moral image of God, namely righteousness and holiness (2.10, 2.24).

Secondly, the call to imitate God ὡς τέκνα ἀγαπητά could be interpreted comparatively[133] to mean that the readers ought to imitate God *just as* beloved children would do or adverbially to refer to the manner in which they should imitate God, *like/as beloved children.* The fatherhood of God and the duty of children are implied in either case. Pseudo-Isocrates indicates that it is important that children imitate their fathers, and he suggests that they even aim at excelling in their father's legacies beyond what they could do themselves. "You must consider that no athlete is so in duty bound to train against his competitors as are you to take the thought of how you may vie with your father in his ways of life."[134] The use of the adjective ἀγαπητός to qualify their status as children (τέκνον) of God lays the appropriate platform to make it imperative to imitate the fatherly love that has been shown to them. In other words, it is only appropriate that children who are loved imitate their father and bring honour to the household (cf. 6.1). Thus, the motivation also presumes the notions of honour and

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[132]Musonius Rufus, "What is the Best Viaticum for Old Age XVIII,"
[133]This would mean that ὡς is here functioning as comparative adjective.
[134]Pseudo-Isocrates, *To Dominicus* 1-15 citing from Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation,* 126.

shame associated with kinship to evoke both an emotive response[135] and appropriate demeanour for maintaining family dignity. Hierocles reckons that children naturally imitate the behavioural patterns of their parents as well as benefit from their wealth and, as such, children ought to live in a manner that brings joy and honour to them, since their parents are 'images of the gods' to them.[136] According to Philo, children should exhibit prudence by "imitating the nature of their father, do all that is right without delay and with all diligence."[137] Thus, Ephesians brings two familiar concepts to the fore as the reason and encouragement for good demeanour in the church, namely religious reason to 'imitate God' and kinship obligation for children to emulate their parents.

Third, the fact that they are beloved children and share one father establishes the platform to call them to duty, περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγάπῃ (cf. Gal 4.5-6; Rom 5.5; 8.15; Phil 2.15). Περιπατέω literally means 'walk', but when it is used in the moral sphere it connotes ethical conduct. Ephesians is consistent in using the word with this connotation (cf. 2.2, 10; 4.1, 17; 5.8, 15). They are commanded to exhibit love in the community, a virtue that features more than any other in Ephesians.[138] A further statement is introduced by a comparative conjunction to underscore the nature of love being

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[135]Nancy Sherman, *Making a Moral Necessity of Virtue – Aristotle and Kant on Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 38-98. Sherman has demonstrated that the use of such expressions and some other concepts to evoke emotional response was a very significant part of moral instruction among the Stoics. Aristotle in particular is brought to the fore as one who purposely seeks to arouse his readers' emotions as well as challenge their minds. Sherman indicates that emotions in morality should be considered as 'modes of attention' that help addressees to track significant ethos and bring a sense of 'feeling' in prioritization of moral choices. "That part of the soul 'shares in reason,' as Aristotle is at pains to explain, and in a derivative sense can be said to have reason. Moreover, with proper training the emotions and appetites proper to that part of the soul can be made to listen to and obey the more reasonable and circumspect judgment of the authority of the rational part" (p. 380). Ephesians' use of various expressions to evoke emotive response in its paraenesis is not exceptional in moral discourse.

[136]Hierocles, *On Duties.* How to Conduct Oneself Toward One's Parents (4.25.53=4.640, 4-644, 15 Hense) cited from Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation,* 91-93.

[137]Philo, *Sacrifices.*, 68b.

[138]See 1.5,15; 2.4; 3.18-19; 4.3, 15-16; 5.25, 28, 33; 6.23-24.

commanded: καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ εἰς ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας. True love should be expressed in a similar fashion as Christ demonstrated in giving himself up for them. For Lincoln, the 'imitation of God' shifts to become 'imitation of Christ' in this expression but that does not seem to be the case.[139] Καθώς is a comparative adjective expressing how Christ, who stands in solidarity with the church in 2.6, demonstrated love through his sacrifice on the cross. The statement is meant to elucidate the nature of God's love that is expressed through the sacrificial death of Christ, and this is couched in a rhetoric that resonates the means of their salvation and serves as a motivation for the beneficiaries to emulate a similar kind of love. The love being required is not the modern notion of inner feelings that simply attract people to each other, erotic feelings, or those which exist merely among siblings, sometimes referred to as φιλέω.[140] Neither is it an inward attitude expressed in friendship among equals or sympathy for the weaker person.[141] Moreover, it is not self-giving love directed only to God (Deut 6.5; 13.4), but it is an inward feeling and expression of love to one's neighbour[142] in obedience to God regardless of status or ethnicity and fashioned in the pattern of love exemplified in Christ. They (inclusive 'we') are recipients of such love and it is therefore imperative and honourable that this be evident among God's children.

In 4.1-3, three main virtues that are necessary for unity in the church (πραΰτης, μακροθυμία and ἀνέχομαι) are said to be exhibited in love. Πραΰτης is a relational term

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[139]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 311.

[140]Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Dictionary*, 6. They provide a wide range of sources in Hellenistic literature that employ ἀγάπη with this connotation.

[141]*TDNT* I,36. The popular notion that ἀγάπη and φιλέω are two different types of love lacks evidence, and elaborate discussion on that can be found on p. 37-38.

[142]See *T Gad*, 4.7. Here love is the law of God for the salvation of humanity but Satan is the author of hatred and his purpose is to thwart the work of God.

and has nothing to do with outward depiction of gentleness associated with aesthetics and nobility in the modern use of the word gentleness. It is rather an attitude or behavior that contrasts harshness in dealing with others and denotes 'lowly spirit,' meekness or mildness.[143] Μακροθυμία may be translated as patience, endurance or forbearance. The third virtue (ἀνέχομαι) is in the verb form and calls for forbearance: the ability to accommodate the other with the aim of fostering a better relationship. Ephesians is careful to indicate that all these three virtues ought to be expressed ἐν ἀγάπῃ as the means to maintain unity among those who are called by God (4.1-3). More so, the author prays that the church may be ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἐρριζωμένοι καὶ τεθεμελιωμένοι (3.17) in a comprehensive manner.[144] Their need to grasp a full understanding of the love of Christ, who is their moral example (5.25-28), and live accordingly is paramount for the existence of the church. In Ephesians, love appears seventeen times as a divine attribute, the basis or motivation for good conduct and a virtue to observe, always denoting self-giving love.[145]

3.2.3.7 Sexual Ethics

The instruction on sexual conduct does not provide us with some positive ideal that will be acceptable in the community unless we presume that the extensive admonition on marriage in the *Haustafel* (which is an extension of the wise-fool contrast) is supposed to account for that, as we find elsewhere in the Pauline corpus (1 Cor 7.2 and 1 Thess 4.3-4). However, it takes the form of an indictment on sexual misconduct in view of the fact that the readers' new identity is incompatible with those deeds. It is also noteworthy

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[143]Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, 88.59.

[144]See Dahl, *Studies in Ephesians*, 367-382.

[145]1.5,15; 2.4; 3.18-19; 4.3, 15-16; 5.25, 28, 33; 6.23-24.

that many of the words that are used to characterize sexual misconduct are broad in scope, perhaps deliberately so, to encompass all forms of sexual immorality. As we have seen in the discussion in chapter 3 on ἀσέλγεια (4.19) and ἀσωτία (5.18), these are vices either associated with their past or depicted as a characteristic of the fool and unacceptable in the church. Ἀσέλγεια features regularly in the NT vice lists[146] where it sometimes accompanies drunkenness (cf. Rom 13.13; Gal 5.19; 1 Pet 4.3). However, it is ἀσωτία (dissipation or sexual excess) that is closely linked with drunkenness in Ephesians (5.18). This is a misdemeanour associated with the foolish outsiders, whose involvement in drunkenness leads to ἀσωτία.

The rest of the instructions on sexual behaviour feature in 5.3 and 5.5. They first appear as a vice list in 5.3 and are repeated in 5.5 in the same order, namely πορνεία or πόρνος and ἀκαθαρσία or ἀκάθαρτος. The author employs argument *ad verecundiam*[147] as the reason to abstain from those vices (πορνεία and ἀκαθαρσία). This is to say that it is too disgusting or shameful even to name such vices among them (5.3). These vices appear together with πλεονεξία/πλεονέκτης in both 5.3 and 5.5 but while they may have sexual connotations (cf. Mk 7.22; 1 Cor 5.10), I have considered it more appropriate to discuss it under passion in this work.[148] These misdemeanours are condemned because they are incongruous with the readers' new status in Christ (καθὼς πρέπει **ἁγίοις** [5.3]).

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[146]Mk 7.22; 2 Cor 12.21; Gal 5. 19-21; 2 Pet 2.2-3, 7, 18.

[147]See George Heyworth and Rossette Liberman, *Stylebook: The Writing and Revision Stylebook* (New Haven: Cooper Hill, 2000), 225. Literally *argument to shame* – it is an appeal to shame or an embarrassment as the reason to distance oneself from unfitting behaviour.

[148]See Eduard Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians* (Trans. Andrew Chester; London: SPCK, 1976), 190. Schweizer argues that πλεονεξία connotes a sense of misguided sexual conduct. See also Vögtle, *Lasterkaloge*, 208-209.

As ἅγιοι, their status is in sharp contrast with πορνεία and ἀκαθαρσία.[149] Later in 5.5, the injunction is further established within the purview of the church and its eschatological vision. Thus, sexual misconduct is not only unsuitable for the current status of the ἅγιοι but it also has eschatological consequences. The author issues a threat to the effect that those who indulge in sexual indecency and other forms of misconduct will have no inheritance in τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ (5.5).[150] Gundry-Volf has argued that similar threats in 1 Cor 6.9-11 and Gal 5.19-21 are not intended to debar immoral believers from the Kingdom but are rather rhetorical strategy to impress upon the addressees that moral integrity is essential for their status as believers.[151] However, Ephesians seems to be appealing to the readers' sense of awareness/knowledge (τοῦτο γὰρ ἴστε γινώσκοντες [5.5]) of the ultimate consequences for those who indulge in such immorality associated with outsiders as the reason to pursue moral excellence.

Πορνεία is often translated 'fornication' but the word has a broader meaning[152] and encompasses "sexual immorality of any kind."[153] The meaning of πορνεία in Mt 5.32 and 19.9 has attracted wide discussion. Guenther argues that despite its wider scope in sexual malpractices, its appearance in Mt 5.32 and 19.9 specifically refers to the

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[149]Judith M Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away* (WUNT 2.37; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1990), 141. This is a depiction of 'Christian behaviour as rooted in a correct Christian self-perception' as one finds in other parts of the NT. Cf. 1 Cor 6.9, 15-16; 10.8, 11; 2 Cor 12.19; Gal 5.19-20.

[150]The expression τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ is *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament. Elsewhere it is referred to as the Kingdom of God/ Heaven.

[151]Gundry-Volf, *Paul and Perseverance,* 131-154. I am however not entirely convinced that the impetus of this nemesis should be reduced to only rhetorical reinforcement. Certainly, a threat to their future inheritance will generate fear and motivation to live up to expectation. It seems to me that Paul is referring to a real consequence of immoral behaviour as the reason for which moral laxity is not an option to believers, at least as the text seems to show.

[152]See Friedrich Hauck and Siegfried Schulz, "πόρνη, πόρνος, πορνεία," *TDNT* VI. 579-595.

[153]Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon,* 88.271.

case of adultery.[154] Janzen further indicates that πορνεία in its Matthean context should be understood in terms of "sex on the part of the woman during betrothal or marriage."[155] The term covers a wider range of sexual immorality in the NT including incest[156] (1 Cor 5-6), harlotry or prostitution (Mt 21.31,32; Lk 15.30; Heb 11.31). In *Jubilees*, it also covers mixed marriages and the sexual perversion associated with the 'sons of God' in Genesis 6.[157] Malina alleges that "there is no evidence in traditional or contemporary usage of the word *porneia* that denotes pre-betrothal, premarital, heterosexual intercourse of a non-cultic or non-commercial nature, i.e. what we call 'fornication' today."[158] However, Jensen has subsequently dismissed the claim and argued that the word was sometimes used to refer to what we may call fornication.[159]

Πορνεία on the part of a woman was considered as a legitimate basis for divorce in Greek societies, though various forms of wantonness by males were deemed appropriate.[160] Total condemnation of sexual immorality among men was uncommon

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[154]Allen R. Guenther, "The Exception Phrases: Except πορνεία, Including πορνεία or Excluding πορνεία? (Matthew 5:32; 19:9)," *TynBul* 53.1 (2002): 81-96. See also Ben Witherington, "Mathew 5.32 and 19.9 – Exception or Exceptional Situation?", *NTS* 31 (1985):571-576 and Bruce Vawter, "The Divorce Clause of Mt 5, 32and 19, 9," *CBQ* 16 (1954):155-167.

[155] David Janzen, "The Meaning of *PORNEIA* in Matthew 5.32 and 19.9: An Approach from the Study of Ancient Near Eastern Culture," *JSNT* 80 (2000):66-80. See also Dale C. Allison, Jr, "Divorce, Celibacy and Joseph (Matthew 1.18-25 and 19. 1-12)," *JSNT* 49 (1993): 3-10. Allison provides more discussion on how sexual infidelity is perceived during betrothal against the background of Mary's pregnancy with Jesus and Joseph's reaction.

[156]R. Kempthorne, "Incest and the Body of Christ: A Study of 1 Cor VI. 12-20," *NTS* 14 (1967/68):568-574.

[157]Jubilees 7, 20-21; 20, 2-6; 30,7; 33, 13-20; 39,6; 41, 25. Also Bruce Malina, "Does *PORNEIA* Mean Fornication?, *NovT* 14 (1972):10-17. Malina argues that the word connotes the sense of unlawful sexual conduct in Jewish literature. The criteria for determining what is lawful or unlawful would be the Torah. This is to say that Greeks who do not believe in the Hebrew scriptures will not have to accept such criteria.

[158]Malina, "Does *PORNEIA* Mean Fornication?, 17.

[159]Joseph Jensen, "Does *PORNEIA* Mean Fornication? A Critique of Bruce Malina'" *NovT* 20 (1978):161-184.

[160]Janzen, "The Meaning of *PORNEIA* in Matthew 5.32 and 19.9," 74-75. The tradition among Greeks and some of the Ancient Near Eastern cultures was that though men could divorce their wives at will, a lack of valid proof for misconduct on the part of the woman would require the man to repay the

among Greeks but the general norm was to maintain a reasonable limit in the extent one would go to express sexual pleasure. For example, Apollodoros indicates that "mistresses (ἑταιρά) we keep for the sake of pleasure, concubines (παλλακή) for the daily care of our persons (θεραπείας τοῦ σώματος), but wives (γυναῖκος) to bear us legitimate children and to be faithful guardians of our households."[161] The πορνή was not considered as a sexual partner but an individual trafficker or a slave that could be engaged for sexual gratification with no commitment to a long-term relationship. As Bruce puts it, "there was no body of public opinion to discourage πορνεία, although someone who indulged in it in excess might be satirized on the same level as a notorious glutton or drunkard."[162] Greek prostitutes were predominantly acquired slaves[163] of the same racial background as their masters.[164] Hauck and Schulz attribute this moral laxity in society to the general attitude of Greeks towards sex in both the sacred and secular arena.[165]

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dowry that he received from the woman's family during marriage and πορνεία was a legitimate case in that regard.

[161]Demosthenes, *Private Orations III – Against Neaera,* 123. See also Apollodoros, *Greek Orators VI: Against Neaira [Demosthenes]* 59 (ed. Christopher Carey;Warminster: Aris & Philips, 1992), 148-149. Carey explains that the terms ἑταιρά and παλλακή are used here in restricted terms by Apollodoros. The two words sometimes overlap in Greek literature but generally παλλακή is often employed to denote "a female, slave or free, supported by a male in a semi-permanent sexual relationship other than marriage."

[162]F.F. Bruce, *I&II Thessalonians,*(WBC; Waco: Word Books, 1982) 82.

[163]Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Dictionary,* 1450.

[164]See Daniel Darko, "The Shadows of the Past: Christian Mission in Sub-Saharan Africa from 1445-1543 and Its Implications for Contemporary Missions," *TJCT* XI. 1&2 (2001): 73-74. In this article, I trace the historical roots of Sub-Saharan slave trade where black slaves were captured or bought by the European masters in the fifteen century under the auspices of the papacy. Until then obvious mark of distinction between slaves and their masters in terms of race were rare, and that is why manumission and reintegration of slaves into society was not so difficult until later years. There was no systematic attempt to dehumanize the black race in order to curb public criticism against slave dealers until the years after the fifteenth century. A slave prostitute in the Greco-Roman world could then be a teenager or young woman known to the master or one who would not look different due to the colour of her skin.

[165]Hauck and Schulz, "Πόρνη, πόρνος etc.," in *TDNT* VI. 579-595.

Plato did not condemn πορνεία but argued for a degree of decency in sexual practices.[166] Plato's notion of decency is that the most prudent thing to do is to live up to the ideal of marital faithfulness with one's wife, but he also proposes that some affairs may be deemed acceptable if the one involved is able to keep it secret. He states that,

> (1) Ideally, no one will dare to have relations with any respectable citizen woman except his own wedded wife, or sow illegitimate and bastard seed in courtesans or sterile seed in males in difference of nature. (2) Alternatively, while suppressing sodomy entirely, we might insist that if a man does have intercourse with any woman (hired or procured in some other way) except the wife he wed in holy marriage with the blessing of the gods, he must do so without any other man or woman getting to know about it. If he fails to keep his affair secret, I think we'd be right to exclude him by law from our state honours, on grounds that he's no better than an alien.[167]

The onus of sexual modesty for men in a Greek *polis* then rested on an individual's sense of propriety. However, Musonius Rufus condemns homosexuality,[168] bisexuality and adultery in unusual terms, and argued that all forms of sex outside heterosexual marital relationship is shameful and unacceptable. He further asserts,

> Not the least significant part of the life of luxury and self-indulgence lies also in sexual excess; for example those who lead such a life crave a variety of loves not only lawful but unlawful ones as well, not women alone but also men; sometimes they pursue one love and sometimes another, and not being satisfied with those which are available, pursue those which are rare and inaccessible, and invent shameful intimacies, all of which constitute a grave indictment on manhood. Men who are not wantons or immoral are bound to consider sexual intercourse justified only when it occurs in marriage and is indulged in for the purpose of begetting children, since that is lawful, but unjust and unlawful when it is mere pleasure seeking, even in marriage. But of all sexual relations those involving adultery are most unlawful, and no more tolerable are those of men with men, because it is a monstrous thing and contrary to nature. [169]

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[166]Plato, *Laws* VIII.841.

[167]Plato, *Laws*, VIII, 841d-e (trans. Trevor J. Saunders).

[168]Cf Martti Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: A Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 19-102.

[169]Musonius Rufus, XII.1-5 (trans. C.E. Lutz). As noted earlier, moralists such as Musonius do not represent the view of popular culture but he was a cultural critic who sought to promote high moral values mainly among the elite in society.

Πορνεία was regarded as sin and condemned among Jews.[170] Prostitution and other forms of sexual infidelity were sins punishable by death according to Levitical law (Lev 20.10-13; Jn 8.3-6) and deemed a similar degree of offence as disloyalty to God hence occasional reference to idolatry as prostitution. Elsewhere in Jewish literature the term features figuratively for idolatry to imply intercourse with a foreign religion that violates the bond of affinity between Israel and her God.[171] Philo argues that social laxity towards πορνεία and other forms of sexual practices do not by any means warrant God's approval.

> In other nations the youths are permitted, after they are fourteen years of age, to use concubines and prostitutes, and women who make gain by their persons, without restraint. But among us a harlot is not allowed even to live, but death is appointed as a punishment for any one who adopts such a way of life.[172]

Πορνεία is a vice and is condemned in Ephesians and elsewhere in the NT as inappropriate for believers regardless of their pre-conversion sexual orientation.[173]

> The word ἀκαθαρσία literally means filth but it also features regularly in Hebrew literature to connote ritual uncleanness, thereby implying unacceptable behaviour before God (cf. Mt 15.19-20). Its appearance together with sexual impropriety repeatedly in 5.3,5 suggests that sexual impurity may be in view here as well. 'Ακαθαρσία and πορνεία appear together elsewhere in the NT to denote sexual impurity (Col 3.5; Gal 5.19; 2 Cor 12.21). The word is qualified here by πᾶσα to include any form of conduct deemed impure and for that matter inappropriate for the members of the church. Ephesians

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[170]Gen 34.31; 1 Kgs 15.12; 22.47; Amos 7.17 and *T* Levi 14.5-6; Sir 23.16.

[171]Hos 9.1; Jer 3.6; Ezek 23.19; 1 Ch 5.25; Ps 72.27; En 8, 2.

[172]Philo, *Joseph*, 43. He further urges the readers to debar the youth from engaging in the licentiousness that was prevalent in their contemporary world and warns seriously against adultery, which Philo observes as the greatest of all sins (44).

[173]Mt 5.32; 19.9; Acts 15. 20, 29; 29; 21.25: 1 Cor 5.1.

indicts all these forms of sexual impropriety as unfitting for the saints in Christ. It is more evident in the author's use of virtues-vice device that he employs the device for rhetorical purposes to reinforce the values that need to be exhibited for the betterment of the church and not as a realistic social comparison advocating for introversionism or world rejection.

The negative passion that is characterized as τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης and associated with the 'old' is addressed in the discussion on the 'old' and the 'new.'

3.3 CONCLUSION

The author's main use of virtues and vices in the paraenesis is part of his rhetoric of differentiation, where outsiders are painted in negative terms and insiders are called upon with urgency to differentiate themselves from them and their own past. Similarly, the current chapter has examined the author's use of virtues-vices to promote ethos and values that will enhance internal cohesion. The literary style and vocabulary bear close resemblance to Hellenistic conventions, though the ideological framework limits the scope of ethics to the new community in Christ. I have shown that the virtues and vices in Ephesians, though presented in sharp antithesis at a rhetorical level, are not counter-cultural but correlate with Greco-Roman ideals. Rhetorically, it had become a common and effective device to contrast virtues with vices in attempts to draw ethical boundaries or give a list of virtues or vices (cf. 4.31-32 and 5.3-5) to reinforce the need for a particular course of action. The author seems to appropriate this device mainly to promote solidarity in the church.

Evidently, the antithesis of virtues and vices, such as falsehood versus truth, stealing versus work, rotten versus good speech, accentuate the negative effect of the vices and challenge the readers to opt for appropriate demeanour. Interestingly, the instruction on anger in 4.26-27 is not contrasted with any virtue since restrained anger, in a general sense, was not considered as a moral problem. Ephesians rather gives exclusive attention, of all vices and virtues, to establish a threefold limit to excessive anger and the need to restrain it, namely (a) it may lead to sin, (b) it must not be prolonged and (c) it could provide a loophole for diabolic influence. The limit on an extreme expression of anger is also shared by Aristotle and Plutarch. However, the author condemns negative expressions of anger (4.31-32) like other moralists in the era. It is noteworthy that the author does not make any overt acknowledgement that these virtues and vices are shared values but rather nuance his admonition to imply that they are 'Christ learned' values and designed to match their distinctive status in Christ.

Generally, the sexual ethics in Ephesians are more rigorous than what one finds within Greek moral traditions and it rather bears resemblance with Jewish moral codes on sexual conduct. For instance, πορνεία is similarly condemned in Jewish literature. It is, however, noteworthy that the injunction here does not go so far as to require the capital punishment one finds in early Judaism.[174] Moreover, the Greek and Latin moralists did not condemn πορνεία but left individuals to exercise their sense of propriety in sexual matters. Musonius Rufus was therefore an exception in Hellenism for insisting that sex must be confined to marital relationship.

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[174]It is important to note that Jews in diaspora could not enforce capital punishment, despite the fact that it forms part of their religious code.

There are some distinctive elements in Ephesians' use of conventional moral traditions that are worthy of attention: (a) only believers are admonished to be virtuous without any mention of outsiders or the outside world, though the wider context implies that the vices are characteristics of outsiders and (b) the motivation and purpose statements suggest that the admonition is purposely made to differentiate or clarify the status and boundaries between the readers and outsiders. For the author of Ephesians, the readers' past is akin to the plight of outsiders and the call to abandon their previous way of life is therefore part of the strategy to differentiate who they currently are (as believers) from their previous way of life. First, the reason or motivation to speak the truth to one another is that fellow believers are now their true 'neighbours,' and fellow members, ἐσμὲν ἀλλήλων μέλη (4.25). Thus, the essence and scope of praxis is internal in focus. They had already been informed that Jesus has made both Jews and Gentiles one (2.14) and are now 'fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (2.19)' who may count seven distinctive features that underpin the commonalities they share (4.4-6). This motivation underlines the sense of belonging, a quest for internal cohesion and formation of the body of Christ that requires honest dealings with one another (cf. 5.30).

Secondly, the reason for good speech in 4.29 (note the purpose clause) touches on a very crucial theological concept for the readers when it states, ἵνα δῷ χάριν τοῖς ἀκούουσιν. I have counted sixteen appearances of χάρις and its cognates in Ephesians expressing God's attitude towards his people, the nature of salvation, the way believers should treat one another, all in the sense of how favour and kindness are supposed to

enrich relationship between and among God and his people.[175] 'A speech that imparts grace' would therefore recall the role of God's gracious act through Christ in their attainment of the new privileged status and thereby generate a positive attitude in their choice of words. A cognate of χάρις appears in 4.32 (χαρίζομαι) to depict the way in which the erring fellow should be treated, namely with forgiveness.

Furthermore, the virtues in Ephesians are almost always qualified by a statement that aligns the significance thereof to the readers' identity or salvific status in Christ. For example, the instruction on love is enshrined in their relationship with God as the father, their duty to God as beloved children, and consequently the need to love one another in the manner that matches the degree of love they have received (5.1-2, also 3.17-19; 5.25-28). Kindness, tenderheartedness and forgiveness are supposed to meet the standard that is exemplified in Christ (4.31-32). The author repeatedly emphasizes that their good conduct must be directed towards the welfare of members of the church and to the new community as a whole (4.25, 28, 29, 32). Thus, the call to virtuous living is to enhance concord in the readership. In fact, there is no indication of any polemic in the instruction or morality that requires social withdrawal or introversionist stance. The members of the church can no longer indulge in the misdemeanour that may be prevalent in the outside world since their new status accords them a single option to high moral standard. In other words, the focus is on inner dynamics of the church and not their relations with or the plight of outsiders. Clearly, the device is used to promote internal harmony and respect for one another, not withdrawal from the outside world.

Ephesians provides these ethical admonitions to its readership perhaps following the death of Paul or as Paul approaches the end of his ministry, without finding any need

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[175]Ephesians 1.2, 6, 7; 2.5, 7, 8; 3. 1, 2, 7, 8, 14; 4.7, 29, 32; 6.24.

to give a realistic historical account of the outside world before laying injunction on immoral behaviour. The virtues and vices overlap significantly with the moral ideals expected of responsible citizens or the elite in a Greco-Roman society. There is therefore no difference between virtues that promote concord and vices that deter peace and tranquillity to flourish, whether Jewish, pagan or Christian. To call for the *modus vivendi* that befits their 'calling' (4.1-3), it is prudent and pragmatic that the author uses the language and rhetoric that is common, comprehensible and effective to achieve his aim.

In summary, the virtues and vices in Ephesians indicate that they do not call for withdrawal from the outside world or constitute realistic comparison of behavioural patterns in the outside and in the church. It rather forms part of the author's rhetorical strategy that makes ideological differentiation between his readers and outsiders while espousing values that were shared by other moralists of the day. The use of the device in Ephesians is very similar to the ideals of the Greco-Roman world. The sexual ethics reflects more of Jewish sensibilities since the Greeks generally had more flexible attitude towards sexual conduct, with the exception of Musonius. Clearly, the substance of ethics in Ephesians is shared values in contemporary Greco-Roman moral discourse. There is nothing distinctive about the substance of ethics[176] but its theological framework. In other words, instead of being civic ideals, they are addressed as religious obligations and grounded in the vision of the church as a chosen community of God.

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[176]See Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists," 1-12; A. Vögtle, *Die Tugend und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament*; S. Wibbing, *Die Tugend und Lasterkataloge im Neuen Testament* (BZNW 25; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1959); G. E. Cannon, *The Use of Traditional Materials in Colossians* (Macon, Mercer University Press, 1963), 51-94; J. Thomas, "Formgesetze des Begriffs-Katalogs im N.T", *TZ* 24 (1968):15-28; J. Friendrich, "Traditional Ethical Patterns in the Pauline and Post-Pauline Letters and Their Development," in *Text and Interpretation* (Eds. F.S. Black, E. Best, R. McL. Wilson; Cambridge, 1979), 195-209.

Easton's observation that the virtues and vices in the NT follow after Stoic conventions is to a large extent true in Ephesians.[177] According to Easton, the use of conventional moral principles made it easier to communicate the ethos of the church, particularly to Gentile converts.[178] He further asserts that,

> The danger in the New Testament period lay in appropriating current Stoic formulas as satisfactory ends in themselves...undoubtedly any virtue could be given some Christian meaning, but not usually when taught in a list; there was a constant temptation-all the keener because it was not recognized as a temptation-to be satisfied with the traditional Stoic content of a term.[179]

Perhaps what Easton observes as a danger is only a danger for modern readers of the text who expect the early church to have developed its own set of vocabulary, rhetoric and moral codes in order to show its distinctiveness. At least in Ephesians, that was not an issue.[180] The main difference lies in the framework where these values are supposed to be actualized in a community with a distinct identity, worldview and blissful eschatological vision. As Mott aptly puts it, "conversion is the transfer from the control of the vices to the exercise of virtues in its highest form."[181] The ability to observe these will therefore be beneficial for internal cohesion in the church but it will not be out of accord with conventional moral ideals. The paraenesis therefore requires the church to be ideologically set apart and to pursue moral excellence without compromising their salvific status in Christ.

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[177]Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists," 4-6, 8.
[178]Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists," 10-11.
[179]Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists," 12.
[180]Also Schweizer, "Traditional Ethical Patterns," 195-209.
[181]Stephen Charles Mott, "Greek Ethics and Christian Conversion: The Philonic Background of Titus II 10-14 and III 3-7," *NovT* 20 (1978):30.

Chapter 4

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF THE HAUSTAFEL IN EPHESIANS

In the review of the *Haustafel* in Ephesians, I highlighted the main issues in the current discussion regarding the relationship between the church and its outside world. In this chapter, I will challenge the notion that the *Haustafel* has an integrative social purpose in Ephesians and establish it within the wider framework of the paraenesis of the letter. I will endeavour to show some problems with the current views and make an alternative proposal regarding its social function. This task will be undertaken in three stages: First, I will review the development of the 'apologetic' or 'integrative' hypothesis in the wider discussion on household codes in the NT. The review will show how the discussion on household codes in 1 Peter has subsequently influenced the understanding of the origin and function of NT household codes in general. I will also make some critical observations with regard to the social function of the one in Ephesians. Second, I will examine Ephesians 5.21-6.9 and seek to determine its social import in light of the relationship between the church and the outside world. Thirdly, I will examine the author's use of fictive kinship language and how it helps to understand the social implications of the household code in Ephesians.

4.1 A REVIEW OF THE DISCUSSION ON NT HOUSEHOLD CODES AS IT RELATES TO THE 'APOLOGETIC HYPOTHESIS' IN EPHESIANS

The prevailing view of the social function of the household code in Ephesians developed as part of a wider interest in NT scholarship about the origin and function of NT

household codes. It is therefore important to review the key developments that led to the current position before examining the text in Ephesians.

4.1.1 A BRIEF REVIEW OF NT SCHOLARSHIP

The debate on the origin of the NT household codes[1] began in 1913 when Martin Dibelius published his commentary on *Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon.*[2] Dibelius argued that the codes originated from Stoicism and were Christianized to meet the needs of the church. However, later scholarship traced its origin to Judaism[3] or Greek moral philosophy with some arguing that they were mediated through Hellenistic Judaism into the church.[4] Meanwhile, Rengstorf[5] and Schroeder[6] insisted that the composition of the

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[1]John M. G. Barclay, *Colossians and Philemon* (NTG; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 69. Barclay points out that referring to the body of material as 'household codes' could be misleading since its scope in antiquity extended to the socio-political spectrum of a Greek *polis.* However, the term is commonly used by New Testament scholars not necessarily to denote a sense of a smaller family unit that constitutes husband, wife and children as we have in modern Western cultures but in the sense of broader family that included slaves, servants and external family members. See also Karlheinz Müller, "Die Haustafel des Kolosserbriefes und das antike Frauenthema. Eine kritische Rückschau auf alte Ergebnisse," in *Die Frau im Urchristentum* (eds. G. Dautzenberg et al.; Freiburg: Herder, 1983), 263–316. Müller suggests that the designation 'household code' or *Haustafel* should be used only for the pericopes in Colossians and Ephesians since the ones in 1 Peter and the Pastorals are not as complete as the others. It appears that various scholars use the term differently. When I use the phrase in relation to New Testament or Ephesians in particular, I mean the body of material that others refer to as *Haustafel* (e.g. Ephesians5.21-6.9). The term 'codes' may be used to refer to it as well.

[2]Martin Dibelius, *An die Kolosser, an die Epheser, an Philemon* (HNT 12; Tübingen: Mohr, 1913).

[3]Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, and die Kolosser und an Philemon* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930), 152-160.

[4]Karl Weidinger, *Die Haustafeln: Ein Stück urchristlicher Paraenese* (Leipzig: J.C. Heinrich, 1928), 50ff. Also David Schroeder, "Die Haustafeln des Neuen Testaments. Ihre Herkunft und ihr theologischer Sinn" (D. Theol. diss., Hamburg Universität, 1959) and Allen Verhey, *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 123, 125. Schroeder argues that the Stoic influence on the codes in both Hellenistic Judaism and the early church was not significant. Verhey seems to agree with Weidinger that the *Haustafel* in Ephesians adapts traditional material in both form and content.

[5]Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "Die neutestamentlichen Mahnungen an die Frau, sich dem Manne unterzuordnen," in *Verbum Dei Manet in Aeternum. Eine Festschrift für Prof. D. Otto Schmitz zu seinem siebzigsten Geburtstag am 16. Juni 1953* (ed. Werner Foerster; Witten: Luther-Verlag, 1953), 131-145.

[6]Schroeder, "Die Haustafeln des Neuen Testaments," 151-152.

NT *Haustafeln* is distinctively Christian.[7] By the 1970s, James Crouch, among others, traced their origin to Hellenistic Judaism.[8] Subsequently, it has been argued that the codes originated from a widespread Hellenistic tradition on household management.[9] This view has become popular in the English speaking world following the publication of David Balch's 1981 monograph entitled *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter.*[10] It is this particular position that has subsequently influenced the current discussion on Ephesians substantially.

Balch argues that the household code in 1 Peter has Hellenistic origin. He establishes this in the topos "*peri oikonomias* from Plato and Aristotle through later middle Platonists and Peripatetics to Stoics, Epicureans, Hellenistic Jews and Neo-pythagoreans, drawing a conclusion that it was a common, popular discussion in philosophical schools and among rhetoricians."[11] Balch contends that the patriarchal or

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[7]See Markus Barth, *Ephesians – 4-6* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1974), 758. See also Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 720-729.

[8]James E. Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972), , 84-101; Wolfgang Schrage, "Zur Ethik der neutestamentliche Haustafeln," *NTS* 21 (1974):1-22 and William Lillie, "The Pauline House-Tables," *ExpTim* 1975):179-183. Also Francois Wessels, " Exegesis and Proclamation: Ephesians 5:21-33 'Wives, be subject to your husbands...husbands love your wives...,'" *JTSA* 1.67 (1989): 70. Crouch has provided a good summary of the source and form critical analysis of the household codes that is not necessary to repeat in the current discussion (pp. 9-36). For Wessels, they originated from Hellenistic Judaism but they are transformed to meet the need and peculiar situation of the early church. She highlights mutual submission, reciprocity and Christological motivations as distinctive Christian elements in the *Haustafeln* and the one in Ephesians in particular.

[9]Dieter Lührmann, "Wo man nicht mehr Sklave oder Freier ist. Überlegungen zur Struktur frühchristlicher Gemeinden," *WD* 13 (1975):53-83; Dieter Lührmann, "Neutestamentliche Haustafeln und antike Ökonomie," *NTS* 27 (1980):83-97; Klaus Thraede, "Ärger mit der Freiheit. Die Bedeutung von Frauen in Theorie und Praxis der alten Kirche," in "*Freunde in Christus werden...*" *Die Beziehung von Mann und Frau als Frage an Theologie und Kirche* (eds. Gerta Scharffenorth and Klaus Thraede; Gelnhausen: Burckhardthaus; Stein/Mfr.: Laetare, 1977), 35-108; Klaus Thraede, "Zum historischen Hintergrund der Haustafeln des NT," in *Pietas. Festschrift für Bernhard Kötting* (eds. Ernst Dassmann and K. Suso Frank; Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1980), 359-368; David C. Verner, *The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles* (SBLDS 71; Chico: Scholars Press, 1983); Franz Laub, *Die Begegnung des frühen Christentums mit der antiken Sklaverei* (Stutgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1982).

[10]Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code of 1 Peter.*

[11]David L. Balch, "Household Codes" in *Greco-Roman Literature and the NT: Selected Forms and Genre* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 27. See Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive,* 33–58 and Angela Standhartinger, "The Origin and Intention of the Household Code in the Letter to the Colossians," *JSNT*

hierarchical structure of a Greco-Roman household was adopted in 1 Peter to augment the positive image of the church, integrate it into society and to curb accusations of civic disruption.[12] He argues that the Jewish writers (e.g. Josephus) and the author of 1 Peter employ the Hellenistic convention for apologetic reasons.[13] This conclusion is grounded in the Aristotelian axiom that order in the *oikos* is bound to have effect on order in the *polis* (*oikos-polis* linkage) hence the lack of the hierarchal structure in the household was a recipe for civic disorder.

Subsequently, the notion that the patriarchal structure of the *oikos* is adopted by NT writers for apologetic reasons was extended to Colossians and Ephesians by other NT scholars. Thus, the *oikos-polis* linkage is understood to lie at the background of the household codes in Colossians and Ephesians, as Balch had argued from 1 Peter, as an integrative mechanism or a means to curb potential accusations against the disruption of social order. Angela Standhartinger[14] argues along the lines of Balch and concludes that the code in Colossians has an apologetic function as well. Schüssler Fiorenza adheres to the 'apologetic hypothesis'[15] and further asserts that, "this strategy for survival gradually

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79 (2000): 117–130. He provides extensive discussion on the analyses of the primary sources that led to the conclusion in the later work. His sources include, Aristotle, *Pol.* I. 1253f. 1-14; Dio Chrysostom 5.348-351; Seneca. *Ep.* 94.1; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom Ant.* 2.25.4 – 26.4; Pseudo- Phocylides 175-227; Philo, *Decal,* 165-167; *Spec.* 2. 224-241; Josephus. *Ag. Ap.* 2. 199-208.

[12]See John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter: Its Situation and Strategy* (London: SCM Press, 1981), John H. Elliott, "1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy: A Discussion with David Balch," in *Perspectives on First Peter* (ed. Charles H. Talbert; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986), 62 and John Elliott, *1 Peter* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 553-554, 584-585. Balch's view of the apologetic function of the household code in 1 Peter led to a hot debate with Elliott, who argued the contrary that the one in 1 Peter is rather meant to encourage the 'household of God' (the church) to be separated from their pagan past. However, this debate has not influenced the interpretation of Ephesians and commentators only argue along the line of Balch. I will therefore not give further account of the Balch-Elliott debate since it does not have direct bearing on the current task.

[13]Balch, "Household Codes," 32, 35. Balch claims that his argument about the origin of the New Testament *Haustafeln* has since become a consensus.

[14]Angela Standhartinger, "The Origin and Intention of the Household Code in the Letter to the Colossians," *JSNT* 79 (2000): 117 – 130.

[15]Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (London: SCM Press, 1983), 266. Fiorenza's view of 'survival strategy' emerges from

introduced the patriarchal-social ethos of the time into the church. As a result, in the long run it replaced the genuine Christian vision of equality, by which women and slaves had been attracted to become Christians."[16] Schweizer has called this the 'paganization of Christianity.'[17] James Dunn also subscribes to this 'apologetic hypothesis' and asserts that,

> The *Haustafeln* of Colossians and subsequent Christian writings indicate a growing awareness that Christians had to counter suspicion that they are socially disruptive. In a context where foreign religions were often viewed with suspicion, the very fact that wives and slaves embraced Christianity might well seem *ipso facto* to be a threat to good order – particularly if equality between the sexes and between masters and slaves was a quasi-confessional element (Gal 3.28), if women were being encouraged to take active part in the leadership of the Pauline churches (e.g. Rom 16.1-2, 3,6,7,16), and if slaves could regard their masters as 'brother' (Phm 16). In such a situation the apologetic requirement to demonstrate responsible household management could very well become irresistible.[18]

Dunn further indicates that all NT *Haustafeln* are meant to have 'apologetic and evangelistic impact' and thereby ease tensions with the outside world.[19] It is in light of this wider discussion that scholars in Ephesians in the last twenty years suggest that the form of its *Haustafel* was adopted from Greco-Roman conventions to (a) integrate the church into the wider society,[20] (b) to calm potential tensions and create an appropriate

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the notion that the early church's position of interpersonal relations, be it in the domestic or ecclesiastical setting, was the form of social equality we read from Galatians 3.28 and the early church had to forego that practice and succumb to social patriarchalism in order to prevent accusations and persecution from the dominant culture. This view assumes that Galatians 3:28 was circulated or known to all churches to observe as a tenet. Secondly, it suggests that the early church was ready to compromise its distinctive stance in order to appease the dominant society.

[16]Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 266.

[17]Eduard Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians* (London: SPCK, 1976), 217, 221. Also Jack T. Sanders, *Ethics in the New Testament: Change and Development* (London: SCM Press, 1975), 75. Sanders indicates that its lack of distinctiveness from Greco-Roman conventions renders it 'completely worthless for Christians ethics.'

[18]James D.G. Dunn, "The Household Rules in the New Testament," in *The Family in Theological Perspective* (ed. Stephen C. Barton; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 54-55.

[19]Dunn, "The Household Rules in the NT," 54-57.

[20]Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 360 and MacDonald, "Asceticism," 289.

platform for evangelistic mission[21] and (c) specifically to curb potential accusations of disruption of the social order.[22]

The 'apologetic hypothesis' is the most popular view about the function of the household code as an integrative mechanism, not only in Ephesians but also in Colossians. The proponents have argued that order in the household was often linked to order in the state and it is against this background that the *Haustafel* in Ephesians is purported to have 'apologetic' function. MacDonald explains what she claims to be the majority view in these words,

> The author of Ephesians is not only making a statement about the shape of Christian marriage but is also using the ethical exposition to make statements about the identity of the wider social group – the church – and about the relationship between this group and the social order in general. Often the appearance of the household codes in the NT has been explained in terms of a need for apology. As the early church groups came to be increasingly visible and viewed with suspicion there was a need to explain the nature of the groups to the outside world... It is very difficult to tell whether the image of marriage contained in the text would have won the hearts of nonbelievers, but it is clear that the Ephesian household teaching would have allowed believers to be integrated within a Greco-Roman city.[23]

The implication is that the passage in Ephesians is written with this form of social engagement as a/the primary objective. The primary sources that are used to support these claims are derived from the works of Aristotle, Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Philo, Josephus and Pseudo-Phocylides.

4.1.2 CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

There are three main assumptions underlying the development of the 'apologetic hypothesis' that require critical attention before we proceed to examine the text. First, it

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[21]MacDonald, *Pauline Churches*, 106-111; 115-122 and Dunn, "The Household Rules in the NT," 54-57.

[22]Perkins, *Ephesians*, 126, Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 251, Dunn, "The Household Rules in the New Testament," 54-57.

[23]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 337-338.

appears to be assumed that the readers had a different social structure, an egalitarian one, but the author made a decisive move to adopt this patriarchal structure to enable them to integrate into society and to curb potential accusations against the church. Second, the prevailing view (see above review) takes all household codes in the NT as having a common origin and apologetic function, regardless of the context in which an individual code appears in the NT. However, is it acceptable to impose conclusions drawn from 1 Peter or Colossians on Ephesians without giving due attention to the function of the household code within the structure of the letter and aims of its author? Is there any reason why the apologetic function of the code in 1 Peter ought to be applicable to Ephesians regardless of its context? Third, the prevailing view on the NT household codes seems to suggest that the patriarchal/hierarchical structure was a major concern in Greco-Roman household relations to the effect that the lack thereof in the church would have prompted negative reaction. Is it a verifiable claim that the social structure (patriarchal/hierarchical) was the main concern for moralists? Is there any evidence that the early church compromised an egalitarian stance on household relationships in order to adopt a hierarchical one?

First, it is undisputable that the patriarchal or hierarchical ethos of the household was commonplace in antiquity. However, it is doubtful whether the early church had an alternative household structure, an egalitarian structure along the lines of Gal 3.28, prior to the ones we have in the NT (see below). Moreover, the notion that all household management rules in antiquity are linked to the welfare of the state as the basis for the claim that Ephesians uses the patriarchal structure for apologetic reasons seems to be a sweeping generalization, as I will show below. In other words, is it really the case that

this structure of a household was always linked to order in the wider society, whether or not its author makes such a connection? If the answer is no, then the textual analysis will pay particular attention to whether or not the author makes civic order part of his objective. I will now give a brief account of my observations in a careful study of the Greek and Hellenistic Jewish texts that are used to justify the so called 'apologetic function' of the household code in Ephesians.

The notion that order in the household has direct ramifications for the state appeared initially in Plato,[24] but it was subsequently popularized through the works of Aristotle, who gave a comprehensive treatment of the subject in his discourses on political theories.[25] Plato and Aristotle establish an explicit connection between the household and order in the *polis*. In both the *Nicomachaean Ethics* and *Politics*, Aristotle's central thesis is how to promote order in the *polis* (state). His discussion of the hierarchical structure and relationships in the household therefore feature as part of his treatise on political theories alongside his discussions on monarchy, democracy, oligarchy and their social impact. Later, Epictetus,[26] Dionysius of Halicarnassus,[27] Arius Didymus[28] and Hierocles[29] made the social order or social impact a significant part of their instructions on order and appropriate demeanour in the household as well. However, Plutarch's wedding address focuses on mutual understanding and respect

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[24]Plato, *Laws* III. 690 A-C.

[25]Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 1160b – 1161b and *Pol.* 1252a–1253b.

[26]Epictetus, *Diss.* III. 7. 19-28; III. 22. 71-72.

[27]Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. Ant.* 2.24.2–2.25.5.

[28]Arius Didymus, "'Concerning Household Management' and 'Politics,'" 147.26-152.25. I am citing from Balch, "Household Codes, 40 – 45.

[29]Hierocles, *On Duties,* Household Management (4.28.21 = 5.696, 21-699, 15 Hense) cited from Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation,* 98-104. See also Arius Didymus, "Concerning 'Household Management' and 'Politics,'" 147.26 -152.25.

between his friends Pollianus and Eurydice (who might be philosophers).[30] He limits his scope to the couple and his reference to the state appears only in a criticism against the orator, Gorgias, who urged others to maintain concord in their households but failed to maintain it in his own home. Plutarch's admonition is thus geared towards the need for modesty and integrity in their marriage, not the effect of their household relationship on the *polis*. This is quite clear when Plutarch states,

> When an orator Gorgias read to the Greeks at Olympia a speech about concord, Melathius said, 'this fellow is giving us advice about concord, and yet in his own household he has not prevailed upon himself, his wife, and maidservant, three persons only, to live in concord.' For there was, apparently, some love on Gorgias part and jealousy on the wife's part toward the girl. A man therefore ought to have his household well harmonized who is going to harmonize the State, Forum and friends. For it is much more likely that the sins of women rather than sins against women will go unnoticed by most people. They say that the cat is excited to frenzy by the odour of perfumes. Now if it happened that women were similarly made furious and frantic by perfumes, it will be a dreadful thing for their husbands not to abstain from perfume, but for the sake of their own brief pleasure to permit their wives to suffer in this way. Now inasmuch as women were affected in this way, not by their husbands' using perfume, but their connexion with other women, it is unfair to pain and disturb them so much for the sake of a trivial pleasure, and not to follow with wives the practice observed in approaching bees (because these insects are thought to be irritable and bellicose towards men who have been with women) – to be pure and clean from all connexion with others when they approach their wives.[31]

Plutarch does not take up the *oikos-polis* linkage, but focuses on mutuality between the couple. He only makes links with the public function of the orator and the consequences he had to bear for his inability to 'practice what he preached' in his own household. More so, the link between the household and the state is not always present in ancient discussions on either the husband-wife relationship or on the household.[32] Dio

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[30]Plutarch, *Mor.* 138-146.

[31]Plutarch, *Mor* 144 D-E (trans. F.C. Babbit).

[32]I will show in a later discussion that the value of marriage, childbearing and the polis is part of Stoic cosmology. It is therefore important for them to foster household relationship whether the immediate effect is on the state or not. It is quite problematic to suggest that relationship between members of a household cannot be addressed on its own unless it is linked with the State.

Chrysostom[33] and Musonius Rufus[34] for example, focus on the domestic setting without making the *oikos-polis* linkage. Dio Chrysostom's discourse on 'Domestic Affairs' reads,

> We shall begin with that which especially benefits a household; and that would be a reproof of slander, for slander is the most painful of all evils and the most insidious. Therefore one ought to act the master with moderation and permit any who so desire to relax at times. For intervals of relaxation are preparatory for labours - both bow and lyre and men as well are at their best through relaxation. But wifely piety is love of husband. But laughter which is continuous and boisterous is worse than anger; therefore it abounds especially among courtesans and the more foolish of children. As for myself, I hold that a face is adorned by tears more than laughter. For with tears as a rule there is associated some profitable lesson, but with laughter licence. Moreover, by tears no one gives encouragement to a licentious person, whereas by laughter one fosters his expectations.
> For great humiliation is the engendering of self-control. For while the begetting of offspring is an act of necessity, their rearing is an act of love.[35]

Musonius spells out the purpose of marriage thus,

> [That the primary end of marriage is community of life with a view to the procreation of children.] The husband and wife, he used to say, should come together for the purpose of making a life in common and of procreation of children, and furthermore of regarding all things in common between them, and nothing peculiar to one or the other, not even their own bodies... in marriage there must be above all perfect companionship and mutual love of husband and wife, both in health and in sickness and under all conditions, since it was with desire for this as well as for having children that both entered upon marriage.[36]

The lack of *oikos-polis* linkage is even more pronounced in the Jewish writers.

Philo makes the *oikos-polis* linkage depending on the topic for discussion. In one instance, the link is made in an exposition of the Law that seeks to clarify acceptable behaviour for women when they go out of their domestic setting into a public place.[37]

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[33]Dio Chrysostom, 5, 348-351

[34]Musonius Rufus, "To What End is Marriage," XIII A-B. Musonius later alludes to Stoic-Cynic debate on whether marriage is desirable for the wise man and argues in favour of marriage as important since procreation and posterity are necessary for the sustenance of the polis.

[35]Dio Chrysostom, *Frag* IV-IX, 5.348-351 (trans. H. Lamar Crosby).

[36]Musonius Rufus, "To What End is Marriage," XIIIA (trans. C.E. Lutz).

[37]Philo, *Laws* III.169-171. *Contra* Pokorný, *Der Brief des Paulus and die Epheser*, 217. Pokorný argues that the link with the state is entirely missing in Jewish and Christian literature, but this is not so as Philo clearly makes the connection. It may be more accurate to state that such connection is not a prominent feature in Jewish writings.

Here, his exposition addresses issues relating to their conduct, physical appearance and involvements in public places. However, in four other instances, Philo's household management discussions are totally grounded in Jewish religious convictions (especially the Laws) with the scope strictly limited to the domestic setting of a Jewish household.[38] *The Posterity and Exile of Cain* features within the genre of allegorical interpretation of Genesis in the Philonic corpus, and here he calls for the need to be set apart from sin and Gentiles and underlines the negative consequences of sexual misconduct in the household. Onan's sexual impropriety (cf. Gen 38.9) and its effect on the household are cited as a typical example. The *Special Laws* (II.225-227) is an exposition of the Law, and here Philo highlights two specific reasons why children and other subjects (slaves) in the household ought to honour their parents: First, children have their origin in their parents as the world originated from God. Second, he argues that all nations that uphold virtue will attest that 'the older must be esteemed above the younger' and children are obviously younger than their parents. Children's submission to parents and the elderly are addressed as an important virtue to observe. There is no mention of the effect of their conduct on the wider society. The *Decalogue,* which is also referred to in the debate, equally belongs to the exposition of the Law, and here Philo gives exposition on the fifth commandment and indicates that its significance goes beyond honour and respect for one's parents to include right attitude towards the elderly, rulers, masters and even slaves. Philo's *Hypothetica 7* belongs to his 'thematic writings' (genre) where the relevant instruction to our subject features as a general moral dictum on husband-wife

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[38]Philo, *Posterity, 180*-181; *Decalogue,* 165-167; *Spec. Laws* II. 225-227; *Hypothetica,* 7.3; 7.5.

and parent-child relationship, all within Jewish religious ethos. I have not found the direct *oikos-polis* linkage of Aristotle in the works of Philo.

This is also true of the poem by an unknown Jewish author attributed to Phocylides (Pseudo-Phocylides), which is a harmonization of Greek and Jewish ethical maxims.[39] In the relevant part of his poem to this discussion, he provides general principles on 'marriage and chastity' and 'family life.' Van der Horst has shown that Pseudo-Phocylides borrows from Greek authors in an attempt to give universal moral principles.[40] The ethical principles in Pseudo-Phocylides would be acceptable to both Jews and Greeks of the time. More so, Josephus' discussion on household relationships features in his *Against Apion,* which is an apology to some Greeks who would not accept the legitimacy of Jewish values and customs. He defends the Jewish customs as the source of inspiration of Greek moral philosophers and appeals constantly to the Law as the basis for his instructions on household management for Jews.[41] Josephus does not adopt Greek ethics for apologetic purposes but rather argues that the Greek philosophers derived their ethical principles from the Pentateuch.

The domestic code is not always linked to the welfare of the state, and where it does there is explicit treatment of the subject. Most of the household management rules by Jewish authors limit the scope to the Jewish community or defend Jewish ethical values as valid to maintain. A common feature in all the codes I have examined, Greek or Jewish, is that they all assume a patriarchal ethos, explicitly or implicitly. It is therefore a mere generalization to claim that domestic codes in the ancient world were

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[39]Pseudo-Phocylides, 175-227.
[40]Van der Horst, "Pseudo-Phocylides," 568.
[41]Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* II. 25-42.

always designed to promote order in the state. Thus, the notion that the lack thereof would have made the church susceptible to accusations is also lacking.

Second, the generalization of the apologetic hypothesis for all NT *Haustafeln* fails to attend to a fundamental principle in biblical interpretation – the need to interpret texts within their literary context. Why should an 'apologetic' function of the *Haustafel* in 1 Peter, as argued by Balch, serve as a yardstick for all other *Haustafeln* in the NT? Why should NT scholars treat all household codes as if they have one focus and function wherever one appears? It is important that each NT pericope be examined in its context and in its own right as the basis for which a valid claim of its function or social import could be established.

Thirdly, contrary to the view that this structure was so critical to the degree that the lack thereof made the church vulnerable to accusations, it is rather a widespread norm in the era. As John Elliott rightly explains,

> Christianity emerged in a social context where these patriarchal structures were already in place. Its choice was not whether or not to 'adopt' domestic patterns in which its members already found themselves, but whether or not to encourage behaviour within these structures which would embody a new set of values typical of a new vision of human community.[42]

Thus, I have found no evidence to support the assumption that believers or unbelievers were familiar with an alternative form of household structure. The NT writers took it for granted that the patriarchal structure was the norm and their instructions were rather meant to encourage concord and responsible conduct, justice and mutual respect in the household. For example, Aristotle's objective was not to promote the structure itself but justice, fairness and order in the *polis*. He therefore begins his political discourse by stating that,

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[42]Elliott, "1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy," 70.

> Justice is the bond of men in states, for administration of justice, which is the determination of what is just, is the principle of order in political society. Seeing then that the state is made of households, before speaking of the state we must speak of the management of the household.[43]

Clearly, Aristotle and Dionysius of Halicarnassus take the patriarchal form for granted and seek to promote peaceful co-existence, concord and justice in the household and the larger society.[44] Similarly, Plutarch's wedding speech seeks to encourage respect and mutuality that will enhance a lasting marriage life.[45] As noted above, Musonius clarifies the essence of marriage and the most important features in the husband wife relationship as being mutuality and procreation.[46] For Jewish writers, the patriarchal structure of the household was part of God's laws to ensure modesty, solidarity and harmony within the community. Philo highlights the need to observe these Laws,[47] whereas Josephus and Pseudo-Phocylides put their emphasis on the dynamics of good relationship in the household.[48] The household was a place where members developed deep emotional ties with parents, siblings and other household members, and these were not supposed to be hampered by the patriarchal structure. The first point of reference to ancient households would not be the patriarchal/hierarchical structure but how its members lived in harmony with one another.

My assessment of the development and assumptions that underlie the 'apologetic hypothesis' has led to some observations that seem to undermine the validity of the claim, even before we examine the text in Ephesians. First, I have argued that all household management rules in antiquity, be it Greek or Jewish, assume a

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[43]Aristotle, *Pol.* I.1253a (LCL; trans. Benjamin Jowett).

[44]See Aristotle,*Pol.* I. 1252ff.; Seneca, *Ep.* 94. 1-4; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. Ant.* 2. 25.4–26. 4.

[45]Plutarch, *Mor.* 140-146.

[46]Cora E. Lutz, "Musonius Rufus, 'The Roman Socrates,'" *YCS* 10 (1947): 89-91.

[47]Philo, *Decalogue* 165-167.

[48]Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2. 199-208 and Pseudo-Phocylides, 175-227.

patriarchal/hierarchical pattern as the norm. Thus, the use of this structure in Ephesians has no special function, since it only reflects the widespread norm. Second, the structure of ancient household management rules does not feature as an end in itself and one would rather expect an unambiguous treatment of its significance if the author of Ephesians had intended to make a case for integration or an apology. The *oikos-polis* linkage is made by Plato, Aristotle and a few others, and in those texts the authors explain the nature of the relationship between the household and state in explicit terms. I have also argued that a significant number of the household codes accessible and available to us limit their scope to domestic affairs and to the Jewish community with no overt connection to the state. This is to say that a household code that is designed to integrate the church into the wider society or curb accusations against a breakdown of civic order would have customarily addressed or made the issue a central piece of the instruction, as one finds in 1 Pet 2.12-3.7. Fourth, I have argued that individual authors in antiquity did not treat the patriarchal structure as a subject matter in itself but rather as a means to promote concord and solidarity in the household. In fact, not even Aristotle claims that the structure itself is that which promotes harmony or order in the society but individual conduct (praxis).[49]

Furthermore, the nature and size of the ancient household naturally required a clear structure of authority. The *oikos* did not bear the sense of a nuclear family in modern Western cultures. The *oikos* or *domus* was extensive and large in numbers, normally with the oldest man serving as its head. In a culture where individual conduct is crucial to the honour or shame of the household, it was part of the head's (male) responsibility to ensure that the family name was not in disrepute. Osiek explains that,

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[49] Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 1160b-1161b and *Pol.* 1252a-1253b.

> Household and family units included children, slaves, unmarried relatives, and often freedmen and freedwomen or other renters of shop or residential property... Women headed households, too, both singly and with other women. Therefore, it would seem that, in spite of the strictly patriarchal legal structure of families, there was a great deal of variety in the composition of actual households (οἰκία, *domus*).[50]

However, society valued men more than their female counterparts and various practices in society favoured men. It was a male dominated social structure with reasonable dynamics of relationship.

In fact, I have found no evidence of a household structure during the NT era that did not have or assume a hierarchical/patriarchal outlook,[51] and neither is there evidence that the 'patriarchal structure' itself was ever adopted from outside the NT to refute accusations against the lack thereof. Moreover, I have found no evidence from the early church or philosophical debate about its validity or the lack thereof – it was simply the norm. Thus, the view that the church adopted a patriarchal structure in order to integrate into the wider society for apologetic reasons is unsubstantiated. More so, the imposition of 'the apologetic function' on Ephesians' *Haustafel* cannot be accepted until our

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[50]Osiek, "The Family in Early Christianity," 11.

[51]See Robert Jewett, "Tenement Churches and Communal Meals in the Early Church: The Implications of a Form-Critical Analysis of 2 Thessalonians 3.10," *BR* 38 (1993):23-43. On a separate discussion on the social structure of the early church, Jewett argues that not all house churches embodied a love-patriarchal ethos but, as he claims, there is evidence of tenement churches that had egalitarian structures (p. 42). According to Jewett, 'the tenement churches consisted entirely of the urban underclass, primarily slaves and poor freedmen/women. Lacking a patron who would function as a leader, the pattern of leadership appears to be egalitarian in tenement churches' (p. 32). He finds evidence of the existence of such churches from the greetings and list of names in Rom 16.14-15. Here, Jewett looks at the root, frequency and association of these names in Roman literature in order to establish that the persons named were either slaves or from underclass social backgrounds. Apparently, these churches did not rely on patrons but had communal meals and catered for one another. While my subject matter is not the social structure of early churches, I found Jewett's argument extraordinary. There is the assumption that slave masters allowed their slaves to have independent lives so that they could join these churches and do whatever they wanted. He further argues that the fictive kinship language (e.g. brothers) and reference to the believers as 'saints' are indicative of egalitarianism (p.31, 38-41). His approach to historical reconstruction with Rom 16.14-15, in my opinion, is highly suspect. It is also clear that Jewett confuses the issues of mutuality and authority-patriarchalism or egalitarianism as social structures and mutuality even in a patriarchal household as separate issues. The fictive sibling language denotes mutuality or solidarity and not egalitarian social structure. Ephesians is a good example where patriarchal structure and mutual submission or relationships do not contradict each other, as I will show.

findings from careful analyses of the text confirm it. So to what extent can we claim that the *Haustafel* seeks to integrate the church to the wider society in Ephesians? Does Ephesians discuss the structure itself (not content) as an 'integrative mechanism'? Is there any explicit indication of its significance to the wider society or a deliberate attempt to project a positive image of the church to the outside world? What are the main 'integrative features,' if there is anything of that sort? More so, is it legitimate to draw conclusions on one text based on evidence from another text? So, what is the function of this *Haustafel* in Ephesians? I will now proceed to examine the passage with these questions in view and seek to clarify the nature of its social function. I will endeavour to show that the author's rhetoric of differentiation is presumed in his *Haustafel* where he also utilizes shared ethical values to promote unity and mutuality in the believers' households.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF EPHESIANS 5.21-6.9 IN LIGHT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD

The main discussion will be preceded by some preliminary issues that will shed light on our understanding of and approach to the text. First, I will clarify the social implication of the age gap between husbands and wives and its bearing on their relationship in a household. Second, I will throw some light on the nuance of references to 'wives' and 'children' in the household, and third, I will clarify the limits of my approach to the pericope as it relates to the *Haustafel* in Colossians, since Ephesians 5.21-6.9 is often treated as a redaction of the one in Colossians.

Firstly, there was a great deal of respect given to the elderly simply on the basis of maturity.[52] This cultural norm was customarily transferred to the marital relationship where significant age difference existed between the husband and wife. The average age for marriage was twelve to fourteen for women and twenty-five to thirty for men. However, Roman girls could be given to marriage before age twelve, though the marriage could be legalized only after they had become twelve years old.[53] "Roman law required the consent of not only the man and the woman involved, but also the *paterfamilias* of each, either their fathers or (if still alive) paternal grandfathers."[54] This age gap left the wife in a situation where submission and respect for the older husband was not negotiable.[55]

Secondly, the mortality rate also had direct bearing on the household. Many women died during childbirth and complications associated with it. The average life expectancy for women was about thirty-five[56] and forty-five for men. It is for this reason that a woman who lived until seventy was referred to as 'the mother' of the citizens.[57] Pomeroy reckons that,

> The age difference between spouses at first marriage, the average age of death for men (45), and the aversion of leaving fertile woman without a husband made it likely that children would be orphaned (i.e. 'fatherless') early in life, and the young widow would remarry, perhaps leaving her children in their father's house and becoming a mother again and/or a stepmother elsewhere.[58]

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[52]Cf. Philo, *Decal.* XXXI (165-167).

[53]Pomponius, *Sabinus,* 1 cited from Jane F. Gardner and Thomas Wiedemann, *The Roman Household: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1991), 17. Also Judith Evans Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity: The Emperor Constantine's Marriage Legislation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 23.

[54]Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity,* 141

[55]See also I Howard Marshall, "Mutual Love and Submission in Marriage: Colossians 3.18-19 and Ephesians 5.21-33," in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy* (eds. R.W. Pierce and R.M. Groothuis; Leicester: IVP, 2004), 199.

[56]Dudrey, "'Submit Yourselves to One Another,'" 43.

[57]Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity,*79-83.

[58]Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece: Representations and Realities* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 27. Also Beryl Rawson, "The Roman Family in Recent Research," *BibInt* 11.2 (2003): 127. Rawson engages in similar analyses and further asserts that, "At the age of five, the

The legitimate children in a household, therefore, were not always biological children of the wife. Likewise, the spouse may not be the first wife or a virgin at the time of marriage, since she could be a widow or a divorcee. However, it was the responsibility of the husband, not his wife, to bring his children under discipline and to ensure compliance to family values, though wives assisted in domestic management. The complexity of household dynamics comes to light when we envision what it took to ensure that the wife, concubines, children and slaves lived in harmony. Customarily, the one who needed to ensure orderliness and productivity was the male head of the household.

Thirdly, the study of the household code in Ephesians in recent years often presumes that it depended on Col 3.18-4.1 and has the same function,[59] as I indicated above. This is problematic, since the function, context and emphasis of the code in Ephesians could be overshadowed by the one in Colossians. I do not intend to examine the text on the supposition that one needs to know Colossians in order to understand Ephesians, since there is no evidence of such prerequisite for its readers. It is also apparent that the function of the household code within the theology and ethics of Ephesians may be marginalized by a methodology that treats its content as if it were an appendix of Colossians. However, I do not dispute the fact that there are similarities between the two. My contention is that critical attention should be given to the message that each pericope conveys within the wider framework of the letter in which it appears.

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probability of having a father alive was perhaps 88 per cent, but by the age of ten this had reached 75 percent, and by the age of fifteen it was about 63 per cent. Corresponding figures for mothers were 91, 81, and 72 percent."

[59]See Winsome Munro, "Col III.18 – IV.21 and Eph V. 21 – VI.9: Evidences of Late Literary Stratum," *NTS* 18 (1972): 434-447 and Ernest Best, "Who Used Whom? The Relationship Between Ephesians and Colossians," *NTS* 43 (1997): 72-96.

The verbal similarities of the Ephesians and Colossians *Haustafeln* are self-evident but the emphasis in both texts is hardly proportionate.[60] My focus on Ephesians will therefore be maintained and the three couplets of the household code in 5.21– 6.9 will be examined in light of the relationship between the church and the outside world. Similarities between Ephesians and other discussions on domestic affairs in its milieu will be shown as part of the inquiry that looks into whether Ephesians is using widespread moral traditions to meet a particular religious objective or overtly adopting conventional norms for apologetic reasons.

4.2.1 THE WIFE - HUSBAND RELATIONSHIP

The function of 5.21 as a transitional statement between the wisdom-folly contrast and the household code was discussed above. It is, however, noteworthy that its significance lies in (1) the way it underscores mutual submission among members of the church and (2) how it loans its main verb[61] to the opening sentence of the instruction on the wife-husband relationship. The imperatival force and the voluntary character of ὑποτάσσω in 5.21 stays intact in 5.22[62] as a conduct to be exhibited ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ. Stag points out that this fear (φόβος) is not one that is "evil and destructive; it is fear which knows

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[60]See van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline School,* 147-203. Van Kooten has carefully examined the similarities between the two letters in this work. In fact, his analysis of Ephesians examines parallels in Colossians at almost every stage. However, he rightly observes at every level that Ephesians is significantly different from Colossians.

[61]The participle functions as the verb of the clause – see discussion above.

[62]See Robert W. Wall, "Wifely Submission in the Context of Ephesians," *CSR* 17 (1988): 276-284; James R. Beck, "Is there a Head of the House in the Home? Reflections on Ephesians 5," *JBE* 1 (1989):61-66; Sharon Hodgin Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2.9-15 in Light of Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 90-91 and Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1992), 157-183. Note that the verb carries the sense of mutual and voluntary submission for all members of the church in 5.21 and this will include the husband submitting to the wife. Here it has the same sense except that wives are specifically instructed to submit to their husbands.

both the love and authority of Christ."[63] Furthermore, it is significant to note that 5.21 is part of a long sentence (5.19-24) that shows a natural link with the wise-fool antithesis and the *Haustafel,*[64] more specifically the husband-wife relationship. In other words, the grammatical structure indicates that the admonition on the husband-wife relationship is part of the wise behaviour, thereby making the *Haustafel* a part of the ongoing differentiation that began in 4.17. Watson stresses that any attempt to discuss Ephesians 5.22-33 apart from the preceding verses should be deemed 'violence' to the text. He further asserts that,

> This is not a self-contained set-piece, capable of independent life outside its context (as in the case of 1 Cor 13). It is not a new chapter or paragraph…There is no dividing-line or interval between this passage (5.22-33) and that which precedes it, no conclusion followed by a new start. The address to women or wives arises from the preceding exhortation with hardly a pause for breath.[65]

There are two significant issues that arise when we take into account the continuity in 5.18-24 as a single sentence in the Greek text: First, it suggests that all parties in the household are supposed to be believers, and this corresponds with the positive admonition to the Spirit-filled wise believers in 5.19-21. Second, it also implies that the household code, though specifically addressing dynamics of relationships in the household, maintains its intra-church focus on how believers ought to conduct themselves. It is an elaboration on how to conduct oneself as a wise believer with the focus on domestic demeanour. The import and social function of the *Haustafel* is therefore not supposed to be different from the preceding paragraph.

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[63]Frank Stag, "The Domestic Code and Final Appeal: Ephesians 5:21-6:24," *RevExp* 76 (1979): 545.

[64]See O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 378, Schnackenburg, *Ephesians,* 231-266 and Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 689-816. They all introduce and discuss 5.15-6.9 as a single unit, while others make this connection in the course of their discussion on how 5.21 relates to the previous section and the household code.

[65]Francis Watson, *Agape, Eros, Gender: Towards a Pauline Sexual Ethic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 222-223.

Furthermore, the conceptual link of the wise conduct and household ethics seems to be an allusion to a Stoic position in a Stoic-Cynic debate on whether marriage should be desired by the wise man. The nature of this debate has received elaborate treatment by Yarbrough[66] and Deming[67] and I will just highlight its main features as it relates to our discussion. Basically, the Stoics argued that marriage is desirable for the wise man, the ethical ideal person, but the Cynics argued, to the contrary, that it is an obstacle for the pursuit of the wise. In fact, the Cynics ridiculed marriage and deemed it unfitting for the wise man, since it impeded his philosophical pursuit and robbed him of a happy life.[68] The doctrine of *freedom* in Cynic philosophy portrays marriage and child rearing as obstacles to the fulltime pursuit of philosophy. Thus, "marriage and all that it implied – the duties of the husband, father, householder, and citizen – represented for the Cynics a burden of responsibility that involved them in a vision of the world for which they had no sympathy."[69] However, marriage and the household had a significant place in Stoic cosmology, in which the cosmos was governed by divine agency and required responsible behaviour from humans that accorded with the divine principles. As Deming notes,

> From this they (Stoics) argued in favour of marriage by pointing out that various gods patronized marriage, or that the Creator, or nature, seen as divine entity, had decreed that men and women should come together in marriage for the purpose of populating and re-populating the earth.[70]

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[66]O Larry Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles: Marriage Rules in the Letters of Paul* (SBLDS 80; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 31-63.

[67]Will Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7* (SNTSMS 83; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 50-107.

[68]See Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, 35-36. An outline of the Cynic position against marriage is given as the background for the Stoic response.

[69]Deming, *Paul On Marriage and Celibacy*, 61.

[70]Deming, *Paul On Marriage and Celibacy*, 54.

Diogenes Laertius refers to Zeno (the founder of Stoicism) as saying that it is prudent for the wise man to marry and have children.[71] Later, the Stoic position was well attested by Antipater, Musonius Rufus and Hierocles,[72] among others. As Yarbrough observes,

> They argue that marriage is desirable and that a wife and children are helpful to man - running the household, taking care of him in an old age, and setting him free for the pursuit of philosophy. The Stoics have another reason for marrying also, one which sets the debate in a new context. They argue that marriage not only frees one for the study of philosophy but also for taking part in political affairs. Indeed, concern for the *polis* is primary for them. Without marriage, they argue there will be no lawful children, and without children the cities will perish.[73]

As noted earlier, the Stoics were the most influential philosophers during the NT era and their view on marriage, which was often designed to counteract the Cynic position, gained prominence in moral discourse in the NT era. The notion that marriage characterizes wise conduct in Ephesians 5.15-6.9 further indicates that it utilizes shared values (Stoic in this particular case) to enhance solidarity in the households of its readership.

The grammatical and conceptual link of 5.15 to 6.9 further underlines the need to examine the lengthy paraenetic discourse from 4.17-6.9 as a unit with the same function. This is to say that the author's rhetoric of differentiation should be understood as consistently running through 4.17-6.9. The household code is an extension of the wise-fool antithesis that sets the conduct of the Spirit-filled reader in the household apart from the misconduct of the fool. The framework that was set in 4.17-24 is therefore recalled in 5.15-18 and expanded to 6.9 with the instruction on how wise conduct ought to be

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[71]Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7.121.

[72]Hierocles, 4.505-4.506 and Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy*, 81-87. Hierocles' compilation of a large collection of Stoic materials gives a good summary and reinforces the essence of marriage. Hierocles further argues that marriage is beneficial only to the imprudent or unwise. Deming presents a good summary on Hierocles on the Cynic-Stoic Debate about marriage.

[73]Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles*, 36. He further discusses individual treatment of this subject in the moral discourses. Here, the aim is to show the link between the wise and marriage but I will interact with the primary sources as they relate to our text in Ephesians in the course of analysis.

expressed in a domestic setting. In this light, the household cannot be viewed as a separate unit with a different purpose or function from the admonition in 4.17-5.20.

The voluntary submission that is expected of Spirit-filled believers (5.21) sets the stage for praxis in the household, and wives are urged to be submissive to their husbands (5.22-24). Traditionally, this is expected of an ideal wife. Osiek indicates that submission here "carries the connotation of respectful rather than servile yielding, but very definitely of inferior subject to authoritative superior."[74] The phrase τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν does not suggest that wives may submit only to their husbands. It rather seems to be an allusion to legitimate spousal relationship. They must be in a relationship where the men in question are in legal bond with them as married couples. The plausible background is the custom that a man was legally and socially entitled to one wife but able to entertain a *pallake* (concubine) under his roof along with his legally married wife and other members of the household. *Pallake* "means a woman who resides in a man's house and has sexual relations with him but is not formally married to him."[75] The *Pallake* cannot claim the man to be her 'own husband' since polygamy was not legally permissible among Greeks or Romans. While the meaning of the words γυνή (woman or wife) and ἀνήρ (man or husband) may pose some degree of ambiguity, τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν specifies the nature of relationship as referring to the legitimate partner that could be claimed as one's own husband. The extent to which she ought to submit is ἐν παντί (5. 24), indicating no limit as long as one remains a wife.[76] Hoehner argues that the woman's submission ἐν παντί is applicable only as long as the husband is not

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[74]Osiek, "The Bride of Christ (Ephesians 22-33),"32.

[75]Douglas M. MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 89.

[76]See Aristotle, *Pol.* 1260a.

involved in 'anything sinful' or tries to abuse her.[77] However, the text has no such qualification. Hoehner fails to recognize that the criteria for establishing what is 'abusive' or 'sinful' in the patriarchal society will vary significantly from modern standards. It was rather customarily prudent for a woman to be totally submissive to her husband.

The unqualified submission of a woman was the norm and necessity for her, among other things, to be able to discharge her duties effectively under the oversight of her husband. These included childbearing, child-rearing and domestic administration. Traditionally, her full submission may also include devotion to the religion of the man and the family gods. Plutarch indicates that the household gods ought to be the best friends of a wife. "Wherefore it is becoming for a wife to worship and to know only the gods that her husband believes in, and to shut the door tight upon all queer rituals and outlandish superstitions. For with no god do stealthy and secret acts performed by a woman find any favour."[78] Dudrey explains that,

> Good Roman wives demonstrate their character by *pudicitia* (which is often translated 'chastity' but includes modesty and domesticity) by respecting and honouring their husbands, by working faithfully to manage domestic affairs of the household – for example, in weaving cloth, overseeing the care of children, and managing the servants.[79]

This does not suggest that marriage ushered women into inescapable or self-imposed male domination.[80] Conversely, the matrimonial procedures, her right to divorce[81] and

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[77]*Contra* Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 745. Hoehner attempts to play down the patriarchal and hierarchical features in the household codes in the course of his exegesis, but those were realities of the ancient world, though we may not be comfortable with them today.

[78]Plutarch, *Mor.* 140D.

[79]Russ Dudrey, "'Submit Yourselves to One Another': A Socio-Historical Look at the Household Code in Ephesians 5:15-6:9," *ResQ* 1 (1999):29-30. Also Plato, *Alc.* 127. It is against this background that Plato argues that the wife, who does wool work as part of her daily routine, is in a better place to advise on such matters than the man who may know next to nothing about the subject.

[80]*Contra* Klara Butting, "Pauline Variations on Genesis 2.24: Speaking of the Body of Christ in the Context of the Discussion of Lifestyles," *JSNT* 79 (2000): 88-89. Butting indicates that this "rhetoric of the household codes allows us to see hatred of women as a societal reality." It is however unlikely that

public expectation of the husband to 'have moral virtue in perfection'[82] suggest otherwise. The marriage procedure permitted the *paterfamilias,* otherwise referred to as *kyrios,* of the bride (either father or an older man) to retain his power over her when he gave her out to marriage. This limited the authority of the husband over her, preserved her primary loyalty to her father and accorded the right to inheritance in her paternal home.

> Only when a father transferred his daughter to the *manus* (subordination) of her husband did she lose the right to equal inheritance from his will together with her brothers. By first century BCE most women preferred to stay in the family of their birth, although children born of the marriage took the father's name and were legally held under his power.[83]

The status of such women did not exempt them from the traditional expectation to be submissive to the husband. However, her right to divorce without the consent of the husband[84] and the *paterfamilias*' power to reclaim her upon unsatisfactory observations to a man of his preference remained intact.[85]

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a call to submission would be understood even among women in these terms. Butting claims that Ephesians seeks to ratify this hatred towards women in 5.22-33 by calling for oneness later among the two. Obviously, this cannot be found in Ephesians.

[81]See Plutarch, *Mor.* 144A.

[82]Aristotle, *Pol.* 1260a

[83]Stephan J. Joubert, "Managing the Household: Paul as *paterfamilias* of the Christian household group in Corinth," in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social Scientific Studies of the NT in Its Context* (ed. Philip F. Esler; London: Routledge, 1995), 215.

[84]See MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens,* 84-87. Both individuals in marriage were entitled to initiate divorce when there was marital unfaithfulness. The custom and legal system made it almost obligatory to divorce a woman on grounds of infidelity. However, the man could be engaged in other extra-marital relationships without any significant query. The woman had the right to leave if the extra-marital relationship of the husband brought her discomfort (cf. Plutarch *Mor,* 144). The consent of the second party was not required for divorce, but the divorce procedures for women took longer than for their male counterparts. MacDowell indicates that the notion behind this delay "was to give the husband a chance to get hold of his wife and take her home again" (p. 89 and Plutarch, *Alc.* 8.6). Moreover, divorce could be costly for the man. Usually a dowry was given to the husband as part of the marital rite, but this might have to be returned if the couple divorced at any point in life. "A dowry was a contribution towards the expense of maintaining the wife and her prospective children. It was regarded as capital, rather than income; the husband was expected to make use of it and devote the proceeds to supporting them, but not to spend the capital amount, which might have to be returned to its original donor if the marriage came to an end" (MacDowell, p. 87).

[85]MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens,* 84-98.

Osiek reckons that married women had reasonable freedom and legal right to divorce, property ownership and property management by the first century CE in the Greco-Roman world.[86] However, Egyptian women enjoyed more freedom and legal rights than their counterparts in Rome or in Asia Minor.[87] Trümper reckons that women were no longer confined to a restricted space in the household.[88] Moreover, Bruce Winter has argued that there was a form of revolution by the first century that gave women and wives in particular more liberty than was previously understood.[89] Winter argues that some women were independent and enjoyed high social status.[90] Apparently, the power of the *patria potestas* over his wife, which was equivalent to his right over the children, "was very rarely exercised in Republican times and not at all in the imperial period."[91] Winter refers to the women who participated in this phenomenon as the 'new women' or 'new wives.' He indicates that these 'new women' had significant autonomy and felt free to engage in all forms of sexual promiscuity, including extra-marital affairs.[92] Consequently, the sexual laxity among women

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[86]Osiek, "The Bride of Christ (Ephesians 22-33)," 32.

[87]P.W. Pestman, "Appearance and Reality in Written Contracts: Evidence from Bilingual Family Archives," in *Legal Documents of the Hellenistic World* (eds. Markham J. Geller et al.; London: The Warburg Institute/University of London, 1995), 79-87.

[88]Monika Trümper, "Material and Social Environment of Greco-Roman Households in the East: The Case of Hellenistic Delos," in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (eds. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 28, 34. Trümper shows that the situation would normally change when there was a guest in the house or a male party, then the women would retreat and leave the men alone. She further assembles material evidence to show that there was much space in the houses in the east for a large number of people to use for religious functions. The house churches in the east could have been larger than it has been previously understood (pp. 42-43).

[89]See Tacitus, *Germani,* 22, and Michele George, "Domestic Architecture and Household Relations: Pompeii and Roman Ephesus," *JSNT* 27.1 (2004): 7-25.

[90]Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women in Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 6.

[91]Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows,* 17-18. See also W.V. Harris, "The Roman Father's Power of Life and Death," in *Studies in Roman Law in Memory of A.A. Schiller* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 81-95.

[92]Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows,* 17-74. Winter provides comprehensive discussion on the state of women in the era. There were highly educated women who did not need an orator to represent them before a magistrate. Women were free to divorce husbands and maintained a high degree of

(married and unmarried), wild living in general[93] and their effect on traditional household values led Augustus to exercise statutory measures to curb the situation. He established laws to reward modesty in the household and punish certain misdeeds severely, but neither his laws nor the voices of the moralists were able to restrain the 'new wives' and the 'new women.'[94]

The legal and socio-cultural indicators suggest that the call for a woman to submit to her husband was not unusual. For instance, Josephus urges women to be obedient or submissive to their husbands on grounds of their inferior status, but he clarifies that this is not a warrant for abuse; her demeanour should be taken as a practical expression and respect for the man's authority.[95] Plutarch emphasizes the need for wives to be modest and moderate in their behaviour, but he also challenges husbands to be good examples to their spouses in order to maintain peace and tranquillity in the household.[96] Plutarch further cautions the woman against the use of magical spells to solicit love from the husband. He asserts that she "ought not to rely on her dowry or birth or beauty, but on things in which she gains the greatest hold of her husband, namely conversation, character, and comradeship, which she must render not perverse or vexatious day by day, but accommodating, inoffensive, and agreeable."[97] It will be clear in the course of discussion that wifely submission was simply the norm and it was not

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independence in marriage. There were times where married women indulged in adulterous relationships with younger men, sometimes with the knowledge of their husbands.

[93]See Cicero, *Pro Caelo,* 32 and 35, Cicero, *ad Atticum,* 6.1.24-25.

[94]Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows,* 39-74. The chapters devoted to 'New Wives and New Legislation' (pp. 39-58) and 'New Wives and Philosophical Response' give a detailed discussion on how these women reacted to the corrective measures that were brought into force.

[95]Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.201. The statement of Josephus provides a clear check on any potential abuse of the wife in Jewish communities. He further instructs the husband to respect his wife and abstain from sexual misconduct.

[96]Plutarch, *Mor.* 145 E, F.

[97]Plutarch, *Mor.* 141B.

adopted for integrative purposes. In fact, the sentence structure of 5.18-24 shows how the author maintains a distinctive framework within which wifely submission becomes a religious obligation for ingroup members.

Wives are therefore entreated to perceive their submission ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ (5.22). Κύριος was a common title for a person or spiritual being that possessed or exercised authority; he could be a leader, master of slaves, the *pater familias* or a god. Dunn explains that, "at the very least, κύριος denoted and asserted or acknowledged dominance and right of disposal of superior over inferior – whether simply master over a slave, king over a subject, or, by extension, god over a worshipper."[98] The motivation to submit ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ may need a further clarification. The phrase may be taken either to mean submission to husbands 'as the lords,' which would be a reinforcement of their authority, or as a simile calling women to submit as they would voluntarily to the Lord Jesus Christ. The current consensus is that κύριος here refers to Christ. First, the reference to wives and husbands are all in plural but the phrase τῷ κυρίῳ preceded by the particle ὡς is singular to indicate a form of analogy. Second, 5.22-23 further clarifies the reason and motivation for the women's attitude by using the church-Christ analogy to reinforce the import of the first part of the sentence (21-24). The submission of wives to their husbands, an honourable gesture,[99] is therefore validated and encouraged by a Christological motivation.[100]

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[98]James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 247. See also David Wenham, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 121-122. Wenham also gives good discussion on Paul's use of 'Lord.'

[99]Cf. Plutarch, *Mor.* 142E.

[100]See J. Paul Sampley, *And The Two Shall Become One Flesh – A Study of Traditions in Ephesians 5:21-33* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 121-124 and F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, To Philemon And To The Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 384. Bruce indicates that the Christological motivation implies that these women were in essence showing their obedience to Christ when they submitted to their husbands.

The reason for the wife's submission is rooted in Christology (5. 23-24). The author establishes the grounds for conduct in the fact that the husband is κεφαλὴ τῆς γυναικός as Christ is κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας. The meaning of the word κεφαλή has been a bone of contention in recent discussions on the role of women in marriage and in the church. The word is often taken to mean a 'source' or 'source of life' which implies an allusion to the origin of women in the creation narrative (Gen 1, 2) but the singular form of κεφαλή is not found in Greek literature to denote source in the context of human relations.[101] Carson observes that the word appears in the plural whenever it is used for 'the head of a river' or its 'source.'[102] It is doubtful whether Paul's use of κεφαλή bears the nuance of 'source' when it addresses the man-woman relationship in the church.[103] Arnold, among others, has argued that in Ephesians κεφαλή bears the traditional sense of the word as 'superior rank, ruler, or leader.'[104] Some have argued that the meaning of κεφαλή as 'a place of authority or superior rank' is also debatable[105] but what we now know of Greco-Roman households underscores the fact that reference to the man and his

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[101]See Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 944-945. The study of the word here indicates that it is used in about twenty-five different metaphors apart from the common meaning as head of man or beast. See also Berkeley and Alvera Mickelsen, "What Does Kephale Mean in the NT," in *Women, Authority and the Bible* (ed. Alvera Mickelsen; Downers Grove: IVP, 1986), 97-99. The word is sometimes used as a metaphor for crown, noblest part, top, brim of a vessel, extremity of a plot of land, source (used only in plural) or mouth.

[102] D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 36-37. Carson argues that the argument that κεφαλή means 'source' in the Pauline corpus is a typical exegetical fallacy where people appeal to the unlikely meaning of a word to meet their own preconceptions.

[103]See Berkeley and Alvera Mickelson, "The 'Head' of the Epistles," *CT* 25 no. 4 (1981): 20-23 and S. Bedale, "The Meaning of κεφαλή in the Pauline Epistles," *JTS 5* (1954): 211-215. See also Stanley J. Grenz and Denise Muir Kjesbo, *Women in The Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995), 112-113. They examine the word and indicate that Paul never used the word to refer to 'source' (Cf. 1 Cor.12.21-27; Eph. 1.15-23; 4.15-16; 5.22-24; Col 1.18) but he probably used it to mean 'authority.' The use of the word in 1 Cor 11.3 is quite ambiguous in this regard.

[104]Clinton E. Arnold, *Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 79. See also David M. Park, "The Structure of Authority in Marriage: An Examination of *Hupotasso* and *Kephale* in Ephesians 5:21-33,"*EvQ* 59:2 (1987): 118-119. Park argues that the most suitable meaning is 'authority or superior rank.'

[105] Walter L. Liefeld, "Women, Submission and Ministry in Corinthians," in *Women, Authority and the Bible* (ed. Alvera Mickelsen; Downers Grove: IVP, 1986), 137-140. See also Mickelsen, "What Does Kephale Mean in the NT," 104 –105.

role as the head of the woman, indicating his functional authority or prominence[106] in the household, was widespread.[107]

The author compares her voluntary submission to what is apparently the truth about the church's relationship to Christ. First, the comparison suggests that the attitude being called upon is not self-abasement to a tyrant but to a significant partner who takes her highest interest at heart. For example, the submission of the church places her under the headship of Christ who is her saviour and who values her metaphorically as his own body. Αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος not only indicates the protective function of the head but also underlines his attitude as one who cherishes the union as an inseparable part of his very existence. In other words, this should occur with the mental attitude that enhances mutual and respectful relationship. In all probability, this would rather generate a sense of value for the believing wives and serve as a good motivation for praxis. Second, the church-Christ analogy has wider ramifications for the relationship between the micro household and the wider church (the macro household). Instead of the Aristotelian maxim linking the *oikos* to the *polis*, the author rather likens the husband-wife relationship to Christ-Church relationship. In other words, the same conduct is expected in their relationship with Christ, as members of the church. The analogy with the church is also an indication that the author has no overt concern or objective for the wider social order but intra-church relations. He rather recalls the differentiation in 5.18 -21 and underlines the moral values that befit their new identity.

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[106]See Liefeld, "Women, Submission and Ministry in Corinthians," 137-140. Also Frank Stag, *NT Theology* (Nashville: Broadman, 1962), 297.

[107]The scholars who attempted to define the word as 'source or source of life' made their contribution at a time when various attempts were being made to interpret household codes in a manner that tones down the headship or superiority of man or tries to make the text advocate some form of egalitarian principles. However, what we are confronted with is a household code with patriarchal structure.

Thus, the call for wives to be submissive in a household where Christ is Lord is a call to religious duty, though the substance of praxis is a shared moral value. The Christological motivation places their identity and existence in Christ, who demands total obedience and commendable lifestyle in the church (4.1-3) and in their households.

The main attitude or quality required of husbands is love for their wives (5.25, 28, 33) and seven out of the nine remaining verses go to address how their love ought to have similar expression as the love of Christ for the church. This is love that is expressed in self-giving for the wellbeing of the other. It denotes unselfish acts, care and self-giving, but it also includes erotic relationship and sexual union by which the couple become one flesh.[108] The call for husbands to love echoes the voice of contemporary moralists. For example, Pseudo-Phocylides addresses the need to be chaste and gentle to the wife.[109] Like Ephesians, he devotes more attention to how husbands need to use their position as head of the household with particular attention to treating their wives, children and slaves in appropriate manner. He states, "love your own wife" (after forbidding him to have a concubine), "for what is sweeter and better than whenever a wife is kindly disposed toward (her) husband and a husband toward (his) wife."[110] Van der Horst reckons that this text in Pseudo-Phocylides originated from Homer and was "frequently quoted in later Antiquity to illustrate the joy of harmony in marriage."[111] Plutarch reiterates that love for the spouse should take precedence over any other reason one may have for marriage. Thus, "the marriage of a

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[108]Barth, *Ephesians,* 621.

[109] Pseudo-Phocylides, 175-206.

[110]Pseudo-Phocylides, 195-196.

[111]Van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides,* 241. His commentary on Pseudo-Phocylides gives the sources of Greek maxims that are used in the poem to give the reader to understand the extent to which the poet borrowed from Greek philosophy.

couple in love with each other is an intimate union; that of those who marry for dowry or children is of persons joined together; and that of those who merely sleep in the same bed is of separate persons who may be regarded as cohabiting, but not really living together."[112] It was therefore a tradition and expectation of conventional moralists that husbands love their wives. However, the author of Ephesians describes the nature or kind of love in question as that which is modeled after Christ. In reality, the substance of love is not unique, but its Christological framework serves both as a motivational statement and marks it as a distinctive virtue – Christlike love for the wife.

Dixon argues that the prevalence of affectionate love and romantic expressions in husband-wife relationships has often been neglected by those who are driven by issues of male dominance or female subjugation.[113] Apparently, some men were very affectionate and romantic in the way they showed love to their spouses. She reckons that the obsession for romantic relationships and 'sexual enjoyment in marriage' reached a level where some philosophers were even cautioned against excessive attachment to their spouse.[114] Dixon asserts that,

> wedding songs constructed the bride as beautiful and sexually desirable, as modestly eager for sexual pleasure. Letters from husbands (however artificial) construct the wife as the object of longing and love, an appropriate focus for the extravagant, erotic language of love poetry.[115]

Thus, Ephesians is not unique in its insistence that husbands love their wives, and this may not be exaggerated in support of Christian egalitarianism or as a value that was not upheld by outsiders. Mutual love among husband and wife is a prominent theme in

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[112]Plutarch, *Mor.* 143A

[113]Suzanne Dixon, "Sex and the Married Woman in Ancient Rome," in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (eds. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 113.

[114]Dixon, "Sex and the Married Woman in Ancient Rome," 111-125. See Cicero, *Letters to His Friends,* 14.2.3 and Pliny the younger, *Epistle,* 7.5.

[115]Dixon, "Sex and the Married Woman in Ancient Rome," 128.

household management rules, but it is noteworthy that mutuality is not akin to equality in a patriarchal social context. Love between married couples was a social ideal and Ephesians does not depart from that but enriches what it means with the Christological motivation and analogy. Perhaps the Christ-Church analogy would bring into perspective the holistic nature of the kind of love being expected of believing husbands.

According to Ephesians, the purpose of Christ's love for the church, his symbolic wife, is threefold: to sanctify (ἁγιάσῃ) her, to present her to himself in splendour, and to make her holy and without blemish.[116] The word for sanctification denotes being distinctively set apart (v. 26). The washing or cleansing (λουτρόν) has commonly been understood to refer to either baptism or prenuptial bathing in Oriental marital customs (cf. Ezek 16. 8-14).[117] Muddiman suggests that this may be an allusion to "the cultic ablutions that precede the offering of sacrifice."[118] Admittedly, we are in the field of conjecture as to the exact tradition being alluded to. However, the commitment to set her apart through the expression of love indicates the underlining dedication and the love of Christ as that which is meant for the betterment of the church.

The sacrificial love of Christ, which is supposed to be a model for husbands, is also geared towards presenting the church to himself in splendour (ἔνδοξος) without any physical defect (μὴ ἔχουσαν σπίλον ἢ ῥυτίδα ἤ τι τῶν τοιούτων). The goal is to manifest her spiritual and moral beauty (ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος) as a means by which he would bring honour to himself. The husband ought to love his wife not only because of admiration of her beauty but also to make her more beautiful.[119] He is to love her and

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[116] See the ἵνα clauses in vv. 26-27 indicating purpose.
[117] See Best, *Ephesians*, 542-543 and O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 423.
[118] Muddiman, *Ephesians*, 264-265.
[119] Foulkes. *Ephesians*, 167.

treat her as part of his own body (5.28). Her submission is not a condition for which she could be loved.[120] The husband's authority is here ordered in service and self-giving love.

The call to love is geared towards the woman's wellbeing, but it ultimately has cultural ramifications to bring honour to the head of the household. It was customarily expected of men to protect women and especially for the husband to protect his wife. The appropriate conduct of women and sexual purity in particular was understood to bring honour to the entire household, whereas inappropriate demeanour of women could lead to contempt. As Osiek puts it, "male honour depends heavily on the chastity of the females of the family, wife, daughters, and sisters. Family honour is extraordinarily vulnerable to attack through women."[121] For example, violating a woman sexually is one of the most shameful acts that could be perpetrated against the victim's family. Ephesians seems to reiterate the mutual benefit of good conduct among household members but gives it distinctive Christological impetus. The elaborate description of the purpose of Christ's sacrificial love as a model for the husband implies that his action is not only meant for the wife's good but has mutual benefit.

The nature of the union between Christ and the church, which also applies to the husband-wife relationship, is a profound mystery (5.32). The husband is commanded to love his wife as he would love his own body, to nourish and cherish her (5.28-30), as Christ does for the church. The author alludes to Gen 2.24 to justify that indeed husband

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[120]Richard Erickson, "Ephesians" in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 1031.

[121]Osiek, " The Bride of Christ (Ephesians 22-33)," 32. Also Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity*, 212-213.

and wife are supposed to be of one flesh (5.31).[122] The oneness motif underlines intimacy – emotional and social interdependence. However, this should not be misunderstood as suggesting that marriage absorbs the individuality of maleness or femaleness, since the text explicitly highlights individual responsibility within the relationship.[123] According to Moritz, the citation of the Hebrew scriptures is an endorsement "to show that Christian ethical teaching is compatible with, and in no way inferior to, that of the Torah."[124] The admonition to married couples is summarized with a final call to action, impressing upon the husband his obligation to love his wife and the wife to revere her husband.[125]

As we have shown, conventional household codes rather stressed mutuality and unity among couples.[126] The question of authority or hierarchy that permeates the modern discussion on husband wife relationships was not an issue in itself. Hierocles describes the need for mutuality in the ideal household more concisely:

> The beauty of a household consists in yoking together of a husband and wife who are united to each other by fate, are consecrated to the gods who preside over the weddings, births, and houses, agree with each other and have all things in common, including their bodies, or rather their souls, and who exercise appropriate rule over their household and servants, take care in rearing their children, and pay an attention to the necessities of life which is neither intense nor slack, but moderate and fitting.[127]

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[122]Peter R. Rodgers, "The Allusions to Genesis 2:23 at Ephesians 5:30," *JTS* 41 (1990): 92-94 and Sampley, *And the Two Shall Be One Flesh,* 75-76. Sampley suggests that the quotation forms a basis for understanding the entire instruction on the wife-husband relationship but there is no solid evidence to prove the claim. See Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Use of the OT in Ephesians," *JSNT* 14 (1982):16-57. Lincoln examines the use of the Old Testament in Ephesians and aptly explains the unsuitable nature of Sampley's claim (pp. 35-36).

[123]Lee McGlone, "Genesis 2:18-24; Ephesians 5:21- 6:9," *RevExp* 86 (Spr. 1989): 245.

[124]Thorsten Moritz, "The Use of Israel's Scriptures in Ephesians," *TB* 46.2 (1995): 395-396. It is obvious that the citation shows no apparent contradiction between the ethical teaching of the Old Testament and the church. However, the emphasis here is on the oneness motif in Genesis 2.24 and not general praxis. Moreover, the author of Ephesians does not indicate any need to prove the veracity of his admonition against what may or may not have been known or not about the Old Testament.

[125]The call for reverence is the second conduct apart from submission that is expected of the wife.

[126]Cf. Plutarch, *Mor.* 140F.

[127]Hierocles, *On Duties.* On Marriage (4.22.21-24=4.502, 1-507, 5 Hense; 24:14=4.603, 8-605 Hense) I am citing from Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation,* 102.

4.2.2 THE CHILD-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

The author of Ephesians instructs children to obey their parents in the manner that would be expected from the contemporary moralists. Dionysius equally pointed out that obedience and respect to parents was a noble thing for a child.[128] The uniqueness of children's obligations to their parents lies in its religious framework in Ephesians – to obey parents in the Lord.[129] This is meant for Spirit-filled believers who are subject to the lordship of Christ.[130] The author provides scriptural grounds from the Decalogue to reinforce its significance as the first commandment with a promise and to establish that the readiness to honour one's parents will be rewarded with longevity and prosperity (6.3; cf. Ex 20.12; Deut 5.16). For it is simply right for children to obey their parents (τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν δίκαιον), whether a believer or not. Musonius asserts, "that everyone should obey his mother and father seems a good thing, and I certainly recommend it."[131] Josephus also argues that 'honouring parents' is a legal requirement and incompliance from children is tantamount to a sin punishable by death.[132] Ephesians espouses shared ethical values and makes it imperative for children in the believing community to honour their parents,[133] since that will also bring honour to the household as well.[134]

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[128]Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rom. Ant.* II. 26. Dionysius further explains the difference between the Greek and Roman laws with regard to son-father relationships. He points out that sons remained under the control of their father shortly after maturity into manhood (the ability to wear *toga virilis* is the sign) or as long as he remained unmarried among Greeks. The Romans, however, reserved the right of the father to exert control or discipline his son as long as he lives.

[129]Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament,* 609. Some manuscripts, including B D* G Marcion, Clement, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrosiaster, omit the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ but several other important manuscripts include it. The longer reading is however preferred by most scholars. Metzger explains why the editors of the UBS text thought the longer reading should be retained but in a bracket, leaving it open for alternative reading.

[130]See also Best, *Ephesians,* 57.

[131]Musonius Rufus, "Musonius Rufus – The Roman Socrates," 101.

[132]Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2. 28 (206) and also Philo, *Decalogue* XXXI (165-167).

[133] The Septuagint quotation will sound equally important to Greek believers because it was customarily expected of children to behave in a manner that would bring honour to their household and not shame. The promise annexed to it may perhaps serve as a good motivation or incentive for good

Customarily, children belonged to their father, a part of his property, and they were assigned to fathers at the instance of maternal death or divorce, but the moralists argued that parents ought to be considerate in the way they treat their children.[135] Ephesians reiterates the traditional responsibility of fathers to discipline and instruct them, but with self-restraint and no provocation. The author clarifies the scope and boundary of his admonition to the fathers so that it might not be perceived as part of the usual parental responsibility. His discipline (παιδεία) and instruction (νουθεσία) are supposed to be conducted in the Lord. Barclay suggests that this is a call for fathers to provide 'Christian discipleship' or a 'specifically Christian body of instruction' to their children.[136] However, the phrase ἐκτρέφετε αὐτὰ ἐν παιδείᾳ καὶ νουθεσίᾳ κυρίου and the ambiguous character of the syntactical function of κυρίου do not make it obvious to deduce a specific Christian discipline out of it. Once again, the father's right is not stated, but his obligation to curb exasperation is emphasized. Similarly, Josephus points out that it is mandatory for parents "to bring those children up in learning and to exercise them in the laws, and make them acquainted with acts of their predecessors."[137] Pseudo-Phocylides reiterates the need to be considerate, "do not be harsh with your children, but be gentle."[138] We find similar admonition in Seneca, who highlights the essence of self-

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behaviour. See Hierocles, *On Duties.* How to Conduct Oneself Toward One's Parents (4.25.53=4.640, 4-644, 15). Hierocles outlines various ways children could honour their parents, and this includes 'washing their feet, making their beds, and standing ready to wait on them.'

[134] H.C.G. Moule, *Ephesian Studies* (Fort Washington: Christian Literature Crusade, 1937), 304. Moule explains that this may include showing emotional and practical allegiance to the parents.

[135]See van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides,* 247-248.

[136]John M.G. Barclay, "The Family as the Bearer of Religion in Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as a Social Reality and Metaphor* (ed. Halvor Moxnes; London: Routledge, 1997), 76-77.

[137]Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2. 26 (204).

[138]Pseudo-Phocylides, 207. It is noteworthy that his entire precept of the household places emphasis on harmony and fair treatment in a manner that promotes mutual love and concord (175-227). Masters are even urged to accept the counsel of judicious slaves (227).

restraint and the need to create an appropriate environment for children to develop self-confidence. He also recommends that reasonable boundaries be put in place for children to explore new things, and not to humiliate or maltreat them. For Seneca, it is a matter of necessity to give children time and space to be creative.[139]

The substance of ethics for good child-parent relationships are also shared by other moralists, but the author of Ephesians sets his instruction within the framework of the Lordship of Christ and gives it a specific religious impetus. The desire for mutual co-existence is shared by other moralists.

4.2.3 THE SLAVE-MASTER RELATIONSHIP

Slavery was rampant in the Greco-Roman world, and it was rather uncommon to find a household without a slave, regardless of economic status.[140] However, the treatment of slaves was diverse. For example, urban slaves were likely to have better conditions than the rural ones.[141] "A slave's quality of life depended upon their function, relation to the master and the degree of responsibility carried by the slave."[142] Slaves were acquired through a variety of means that included sales, war, and kidnapping. Moreover, households were large in numbers, and an aristocrat would normally boast of his wealth in terms of the number of people he fed in his household.[143] It is estimated that over

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[139]Seneca, *De Ira* 2. 21.1-6.

[140]Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 129-131. Cf. John Byron, *Slavery Metaphors in Early Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (WUNT 2.162; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003). The central thesis of Byron is that Paul's treatment of slavery or use of slave metaphors are taken from his Jewish heritage. I do not think such conclusion is applicable to Ephesians since its author would not have to borrow a distant concept in order to address a widespread practice of slave ownership in the Greco-Roman world.

[141]John Byron, "Paul and the Background of Slavery: The *Status Quaestionis* in New Testament Scholarship," *CBR* 3.1 (2004): 133.

[142]Byron, "Paul and the Background of Slavery," 133.

[143]Jane F. Gardner and Thomas Wiedemann, *The Roman Household: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1991), 8.

thirty percent of an urban population in the first century CE were slaves.[144] The division of domestic space into *gynaikonitis* (room for women) and *andron* (room for men) was not a deterrent to the mobility of slaves in the household[145] since wives, daughters and slave girls worked on textiles, needle work and crafts together.[146] By law and in practice slaves were expected to function within the dictates of the master, but it was not uncommon to have slave rebellion, hence the maxim, 'every slave we own is an enemy we harbour.'[147] Generally, slaves were able to enjoy good relationship with other members of the household and lived together with the rest of the household even among the elite.[148] They ate sufficient food and usually had the opportunity to dine with the rest of the household at a table.[149] However, slaves who worked in the domestic setting were treated better than the ones who discharged their duties in the field.[150] Martin's study,

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[144]See P. A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 121-131.

[145]Pomeroy, *Families in Classical and Hellenistic Greece*, 29-31.

[146]Rawson, "The Roman Family in Recent Research," 123.

[147]Dudrey, "Submit Yourselves to One Another", 30. See Tacitus, *Annals* 14.42-45. Tacitus reports on the debate about the appropriate way to deal with slaves who rebel.

[148]Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Societies in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 103, David L. Balch, "Rich Pompeiian Houses, Shops for Rent, and the Huge Apartment Building in Herculaneum as Typical Spaces for Pauline Churches," *JSNT* 27.1 (2004): 32-37 and Margaret MacDonald and Halvor Moxnes, "Domestic Space and Families in Early Christianity: Editors' Introduction," *JSNT* 27.1 (2004): 5. Also Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "*Domus* and *Insulae* in Rome: Families and Housefuls," in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (eds. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 3-18. They point to the architecture of the first century and highlight the fact that not only were slaves, women and men living together in the same space without strict demarcations, but the houses and apartments were larger than previously thought. It is on this basis that the notion that Pauline house churches were small and met in homes that could not accommodate more than forty people is challenged with more recent archaeological evidence. Apparently, religious meetings in people's homes were not unique to Christianity, since people had household gods and invited others to participate in their rituals as well.

[149] See Helmut Koester, *History, Culture and Religion of Hellenistic Age* (New York: W DE G,. 1980), 59-62 and Albert A. Bell Jr., *A Guide to the New Testament World* (Scottsdale: Herald, 1994), 195. For instance, Pliny was known to have treated his slaves humanely and never made them work in chains. Later, slaves who had special skills and education could be employed in a better-situated household or serve the public as teachers, librarians, court poets and high-ranking administrators. On the other hand, there were also others who treated their slaves cruelly. There were some upper-class women who took out their anger at their husbands by beating their slaves (*Sat.* 6. 475-485).

[150]See Richard Saller, "Women, Slaves, and the Economy of the Roman Household," in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (eds. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 190-191. Also Paul ErdKamp, "Agriculture, Underdevelopment, and the

mainly based on funeral inscriptions, has shown that some slaves were even allowed to marry and become legitimate parents. He indicates that slaves could "serve as husbands, wives, children, parents, lovers, siblings, patrons, and clients in relations with slave, freed and free people."[151]

The slave-master owned them as property and, as such, he had the right to every form of discipline necessary to put them under control. Keener points out that the slaves could be flogged or subjected to torture.

> This discipline was not limited to slaves, of course; it was usually applied also to children, though it was applied to them more sparingly…Slaves could be examined under torture; for some reasons the Romans believed this method was effective in exposing the truth rather than producing fabrications.[152]

Keener reckons that these Roman slave laws became widespread in antiquity.[153] More so, it was acceptable for slave masters, male or female, to use them for sexual gratification.[154] Slaves had no honour on their own to preserve, as their sense of being or identity was created by the master who had power to change their names at will.[155] This attitude towards slaves made slave women particularly vulnerable.

Cost of Rural Labour in the Roman World," *CQ* 49 (1999): 556-572. Saller indicates that women slaves were more likely to be field workers, since men were more valued and trained to serve in various capacities in the house (p. 119-204).

[151]Dale B. Martin, "Slave Families and Slaves in Families," in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (eds. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 230.

[152]Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives,* 200.

[153]Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives,* 201. Also M.I. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (New York: Viking, 1980), 18-19.

[154]J. Albert Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 129-136. Harrill gathers evidence from moral philosophers to show that slaves suffered high degree of sexual and economic exploitation (including castration) from slave dealers before they were sold out. This practice was however condemned by the moralists, as he further indicates.

[155]See William L. Westermann, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1955), 96.

> The female slave can lay no claim to chastity or shame, which have no meaning. In the official view she cannot have sensitivity toward chastity. Her honour cannot be violated because it does not exist, though the property rights of her owner over her can be infringed upon for sexual violation, injury or death by another who does not hold such property rights. No legal recognition is granted to the sexual privacy of the female slave.[156]

Incidentally, a female slave may have a child with the master, but that child would still be a born-slave if the mother is not manumitted before delivery. However, a master may manumit a pregnant slave with his child prior to delivery in order to ensure the status of the child as legitimate and free-born.[157] "It was perfectly legal for a man to free a slave woman in order to marry her. The *lex Aelia Sentia* of Augustus made it possible for a slave-owner to manumit slaves under 30 for the purpose of marriage..."[158] The Stoics argued that "slaves were human beings as everybody else, that they possessed the same natural abilities and rights, and that the true freedom of humanity was independent of social status."[159] It is against this background of Greco-Roman slavery that the slave-master relationship in Ephesians will be examined, not from the lenses of the transatlantic slave trade.[160]

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[156]Carolyn Osiek, "Female Slaves, *Porneia,* and the Limits of Obedience," in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (eds. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 257.

[157]See Andrew Lintott, "The Slave and the Freedman or Woman in the Family," *CQ* 52. 2 (2002): 560-565. This is a case study on slavery and manumission in the first century CE and it discusses the question of when and why an individual slave could be manumitted.

[158]Grubbs, *Law and Family in Late Antiquity,* 281. Cf. G.H.P. Thompson, *The Letters of Paul to the Ephesians, to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1967), 91.

[159]Koester, *History, Culture and Religion of the Hellenistic Age,* 62.

[160]See Darko, "The Shadows of the Past: Christian Mission in Sub-Saharan Africa from 1445 – 1543 and its Implications for Contemporary Missions," 68-82. Here I discuss the origin, nature and involvement of the church in the transatlantic slave trade in sub-Saharan Africa. One would realize that there is significant difference between the two.

Slavery was not condemned in Jewish literature (Ex 21.2-11; 23.12)[161] or in early Christianity.[162] In fact, slavery was rather endorsed as a legitimate practice for believers in the early church, as one finds in the wider society.[163] Ephesians does not advise slaves about their rights but adopts the widespread position on slavery without any reservation and calls for unqualified obedience and loyalty to the master. The author devotes more attention to the attitude and obligations of the slave and redefines their attitude to their masters and work as part of the moral obligations for slaves who are believers in Christ. Their duties must be discharged not with the intention to please their earthly masters but, as believers, they are δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ whose services ought to be conducted as if they are doing τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ from the sincerity of heart (6.6).

As a standard part of household discussion, the master – slave relationship is addressed to underline the fact that slaves form a part of the household and their conduct is also crucial for concord and productivity. A slave is required to give unqualified obedience to their masters, and Ephesians echoes the norm. It has even been suggested that the author's call for unqualified slave obedience (in everything) would have left the option open for believing masters to use their slaves for sexual gratification as well.[164] In other words, those rights are not taken from them even as members of God's new

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[161]Also Philo, *Spec. Leg.*, 2.81-83, 123. Fellow Israelites who were acquired as slaves came under a rubric called 'bondage slaves.' They could be released in the shemittah (7th year). However, diaspora Jews owned non-Jewish slaves in the Greco-Roman world as well.

[162]See Harrill, *Slaves in the New Testament,* 85-117. Harrill argues that the NT household codes are reminiscent of or follow after ancient handbooks both in structure and in content. Ephesians is singled out as a letter that 'imitates the handbook style in a number of ways' (p.116). On the issue of slavery, he indicates that, "the letter (Ephesians) is practical, trying to help householders become better masters while also educating them in the meaning of proper mastery in a larger hierarchy. It also tutors ordinary people, even slaves, in a 'worthy life'."

[163]Jennifer A. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford Press, 2002), 130-152. Glancy systematically shows how the NT writers endorsed some of the extreme measures of slavery as acceptable practice. She further shows the continuation of this practice and legitimization in the patristic writings.

[164]Osiek, "Female Slaves, *Porneia,* and the Limits of Obedience," 271.

community in Christ. Ephesians refers to slave masters as 'earthly masters,' since they and their slaves function under the authority of a higher master to be named as 'the Lord/master who is in heaven' (6.9). The believing slaves have a new identity and are referred to as δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ (6.6), but in reality it is only a rhetorical spin to prompt a change of attitude and perspective of who they are and what they do, as believing slaves. In effect, the "believing slaves who perform their household duties as slaves of Christ will also be doing the will of God, since that has been expressed supremely in Christ."[165] Therefore, they ought to desist from trying to gain the favour of their earthly masters. Thus, the traditional services of slaves are legitimized by the Christological endorsement, and they are given as the will of God (6.7). According to Ephesians, God requires diligence from slaves and promises reward for their good conduct. Nathan indicates that this view saw no demise or alteration in the first four centuries of Christianity.[166] It is noteworthy that Ephesians does not propose that slaves be allowed some freedom outside their traditional obligations but it rather places a higher demand on them to exercise their duty, since it is the will of God and must be done in the Lord.

Slavemasters are subsequently entreated to exercise ownership rights in view of the fact that they are also stewards of a 'heavenly master' who will ultimately require accountability in the manner they treat their own slaves.[167] They are therefore instructed

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[165]Arthur G. Patzia, *Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon* (Peabody: Hendrickson , 1990), 279.

[166]Geoffrey S. Nathan, *The Family in Late Antiquity: The Rise of Christianity and the Endurance of Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2000), 74-106, 133-158, 169-184. The early church did not condemn slavery or argue for gender equality. It is therefore crucial to guard against the imposition of modern phenomenon on ancient text. As Nathan observes, "when we examine Christian attitudes towards slaves and slavery, especially in regard to those who had certain affective ties or at least feelings of loyalty to their *familia*, it was society rather than religion that dictated Christian opinion and action...slaves and masters may have been equal before the Church and God, but in this world they were to maintain their places in this world's social structure" (p. 171).

[167]See I.A.H. Combes, *The Metaphor of Slavery in the Writings of the Early Church: From the New Testament to the Beginning of the Fifth Century* (JSNTSup 156; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press,

to have "a corresponding attitude to that (which is) required of the slaves, namely, making their service of the one heavenly Master determinative for their actions."[168] Customarily, a slave master is under no legal obligation to refrain from posing threats to his slaves but, like other moralists, Ephesians indicates that it is morally commendable for the master to exercise self-restraint and humane treatment. They are "to act towards their slaves with the same regard to the will of God, with the same recognition of authority of Christ, with sincerity and good feelings which had been enjoined on the slaves themselves."[169] The master ought to understand that the ultimate judge of human behaviour and thought is impartial and will judge them on how they treat their slaves. One may observe how any potential abuse of the husband, father and master in this household code is placed under check or restrained in order to encourage mutuality in the household.

There are some important observations that need to be highlighted as we come to the end of the discussion on the household code before we proceed further. First, in each of the three pairs the weaker person is addressed first, persons are named (e.g. wives), each is given reciprocal obligation in the way they treat the other, a command is issued and grounds/motivation for conduct are stated.[170] Second, the author reshapes the substance of conventional household management rules into religious obligations for members of a new community that is subject to the lordship of Christ. This Christocentric framework underpins the distinctive status of the addressees and gives a

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1998). Combes argues that the image of the slave-master relationship and the rights of the slave master are inherent in the notion of spiritual slavery, as slave of God or submission to his lordship. This imagery also lies at the background of the notion of being a slave to sin or being saved to become a slave of Christ.

[168] Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 423.

[169] Charles Hodge, *Commentary On The Epistle To The Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 368.

[170]Daniel Darko, "The Haustafel in Ephesians versus Contemporary African Family Dynamics," *TJCT* XIV.2 (2004): 20.

religious impetus to their moral obligations towards one another in the household. The wife is to 'submit' as to the Lord; the husband is to 'love' as Christ loves the church, and children and slaves to obey 'in the Lord' or 'as to Christ' respectively. This is a reinforcement of their new identity in Christ and calls for attitude and relationship that corresponds with their new status in Christ. As noted earlier, the household code is part of the admonition for the wise living of Spirit-filled believers, and its instruction is consistently qualified as a distinctive praxis for the believing community, thereby indicating a consistent pattern of differentiation. The claim that "the household code stands out as self contained unit, influenced by tradition in both form and content"[171] is therefore flawed and cannot be substantiated by evidence in the letter. Third, the *submission* of wives, husband's *love* for their wives, children's *obedience* to parents and slaves to their masters were shared values in Greco-Roman moral philosophy. The author consistently uses these widespread values to promote internal cohesion in a community with a distinct identity in Christ, as one finds in the previous admonition in 4.17-5.21. Thus, there is a consistent rhetoric of differentiation running through 4.17-6.9 alongside a consistent use of shared ethical values. However, while the rhetoric accentuates the differences between insiders and outsiders, the shared ethical values are portrayed as religious or 'Christ learned' moral principles that correspond with their new identity in Christ. Fourthly, though of little significance to our subject matter, no member of the household is given the right to put the other member under compulsive measures in demand for good conduct. The husband, father or master is rather

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[171]MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 325. MacDonald is one among many scholars who treat the household code as a separate unit with a different function from other parts of the ethics in the letter.

commanded to exercise self-restraint and develop an attitude that fosters mutual understanding and seeks the betterment of all members of the household.

Furthermore, there are two main areas in the ongoing discussion that require consideration. First, there is no evidence to suggest a deliberate attempt to highlight patriarchal ethos for apologetic reasons or an attempt to critique the social structure of the conventional household code. It rather uses the common sense of the era – shared ethical values to promote mutuality among its members. The quest for an honourable lifestyle and harmonious relationships in a commendable household is the imagery being portrayed in Ephesians. Moreover, there is no indication of a church outside the wider society attempting either to negotiate its way back into the society or to adopt certain norms that were previously abandoned in order to be integrated into the society. Unlike Col 4.5, the conduct of the wise in Ephesians is not directed towards outsiders but mutuality among insiders in the community of believers (5.18b-6.9). The *Haustafel* provides Christological motivations to enforce praiseworthy virtues without showing its ramifications in the wider society. In other words, their new identity requires that they live honourable lives in their households. The author does not seek to integrate the church into the wider society – the church is already part of society. There is no *oikos-polis* linkage here but what may rather be termed as *oikos-ekklesia* linkage (a link between the domestic life of the believers and the church).

Second, contrary to the view that the household code in Ephesians seeks to integrate the church into the wider society for apologetic reasons, there is no evidence in the text to support the claim. The focus is on believers and believing households alone. In light of the antithesis in 5.15-6.9, the author seems to maintain that his admonition is

distinctive to the church. The Christological framework and the lack of explicit acknowledgment of the use of shared ethical values suggests an attempt to show that it is somehow distinctive and applicable only to members in the community of believers. However, the main distinction lies in the ideological (religious) framework and not the substance of ethics. Moreover, the Ephesians *Haustafel* is neither a polemic nor compromise that is necessitated by the need to appease or curb potential accusations from the outside world. It is quite evident that mutuality in a Christocentric framework and its repercussions on the church as a whole are the primary concerns, not relations to the outside world. The grammatical and conceptual link between the household and wise conduct attests to the fact that it is part of the author's strategy for differentiation in the entire paraenesis.

Household codes are generally moral instruction that encourage appropriate and commendable behaviour in the domestic setting and foster orderliness that may have wider socio-political repercussions. Usually, the emphasis is not on structural relations (authority or equality) but mutuality and peaceful coexistence in the household. The *oikia* or *domus* is the primary point of reference to individual identity and sense of belonging in the ancient world. In other words, if the patriarchal household was generally characterized as the domain of abuse and male manipulation, then the early church was doing itself disservice when it adopted the household as a model for the church.[172] Plutarch underlines the centrality of mutuality, modesty and respect in husband wife relationships.[173] There is extensive evidence to substantiate the fact that household management rules in antiquity were principally geared towards fostering

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[172]Cf. Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 57.

[173]Plutarch, *Mor.* 144C.

mutual respect and concord in the household. Ephesians shares this position to promote unity or harmony in the households of its readers. The image of the household as the matrix of individual identity, where family honour is maintained, became an appropriate metaphor for the early church. It is on this note that I will proceed to show that the household generally had a positive import as a place where the sense of belonging and cordiality flourished. I will argue that the fictive kinship lexemes in Ephesians reiterate how household relationships were understood and used as a metaphor for the church.

4.2 THE HAUSTAFEL AND FICTIVE KINSHIP LANGUAGE IN EPHESIANS

The use of kinship language apart from household codes is common in the Pauline corpus[174] and Ephesians is no exception. However, the frequent use of fictive sibling language (ἀδελφός) in the undisputed letters is lacking in Ephesians where the word appears only two times. The NT usage often alludes to the notion of the family as the locus of strong ties and cordial relationships in its milieu. The believers are called 'brothers,' children/sons of God and God as their father to denote their new identity in Christ and relation to one another in the Pauline corpus.[175] This language in Paul, especially sibling language (brothers/sisters), engenders a strong sense of belonging and solidarity, thereby underlining loyalty and support in the church.[176] Horrell reckons that

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[174]See Reider Aasgaard, *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters: Christian Siblingship in Paul* (ECC; London: T&T Clark, 2004). The entire book looks into different use of fictive sibling language in Paul.

[175]See David G. Horrell, "From ἀδελφοί to οἶκος Θεοῦ: Social Transformation in Pauline Christianity," *JBL* 120/2 (2001):293-311. The focus of the discussion here will not make it possible to discuss various appearances of kinship lexemes in Paul, references to members as brothers and sisters either in Corinthians, Galatians or Thessalonians or even how or when he uses sibling language in the attempt to recommend his colleagues to churches. Horrell attends to most of the references in Paul in this article. The works of Esler and Aasgaard cited below also attend to some of those details.

[176]Reidar Aasgaard, "Brotherhood in Plutarch and Paul: Its Role and Character," in *Constructing Early Church Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor* (ed. Halvor Moxnes; London: Routledge, 1997), 166-182. In this article Aasgaard demonstrates a close resemblance between Paul and Plutarch's

all 112 appearances of ἀδελφός in the undisputed Pauline letters seek to promote affection, mutuality and solidarity in the church.[177] Esler has also shown how Paul uses sibling language in 1 Thessalonians and Galatians as a "desirable model for the solidarity, harmony and intimacy which he wished to characterise his congregation."[178] Thus, the kinship language which is employed as an allusion to mutual relationships in an ideal household is a suitable model to bind and maintain good relationships in the early church. The use of kinship language does not refer to power structures or the significance of hierarchical or patriarchal structures in Paul.

Ephesians is consistent with the Pauline tradition in using kinship language to encourage mutuality and positive identity. However, it is noteworthy that this has received little attention in scholarly discussions on Ephesians. I will endeavour to show here that the fictive kinship lexemes in the epistle play an important role in the way we understand how the author presents the significance of household relations in the letter. I will also show how the fictive kinship language contributes to the construction of the readers' distinctive and moral identity. The *oikos* extends from husband, wife and children to slaves and some members of the external family.[179] Similarly, the socio-political repercussion of order in the household and the lack thereof in Ephesians has

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use of kinship language and indicates that Paul's readers would have understood the connotations of the kinship metaphors and their relational benefits and obligations.

[177]Horrell, "From ἀδελφοί to οἶκος Θεοῦ," 299 and Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 115. *Contra* Jewett, "Tenement Churches and Communal Meals in the Early Church," 30 and 38-40. He explains the fictive kinship language in terms of a social structure, specifically egalitarianism.

[178]Philip F. Esler, "Keeping it in the Family: Culture, Kinship and Identity in 1 Thessalonians and Galatians," in *Families and Family Relations as Represented in Early Judaisms and Early Christianities: Text and Fictions* (eds. Jan Willen van Henten and Athalya Brenner; Leiden: Deo Publishing, 2000), 180.

[179]Geoffrey S. Nathan, *The Family in Late Antiquity: The Rise of Christianity and the Endurance of Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2000), 182-184.

also been discussed previously.[180] I will now focus the discussion mainly on how fictive kinship language is used in Ephesians and how it informs our understanding of the social function of the household code.

Ephesians depicts believers as God's adopted children in 1.5 and God as the πατήρ of the community six times (1.2, 3; 2.18; 3.14; 4.6; 6.23). The fatherhood of God places him as the unifying agent of the household and responsible for provision, protection and ensuring order. As a father, God is portrayed as having demonstrated great love by selection and redemption/reconciliation of both Jews and Gentiles to himself through Christ (1.4; 2.4, 16-18; 4.6). In this letter, the main accent on the attitude of the father is on love (as also in the Haustafel) and not his power or rights. The church is depicted as 'beloved children' (5.1) who have a new identity after the likeness of God (4.24). O'Brien indicates that the notion of the church being children in God's own family is bound to evoke a sense of belonging.[181] The customary obligation for children to imitate their father[182] is invoked in 5.1 to prompt honourable behaviour. As the father provides and protects, God will also give them wisdom and knowledge (1.17). Their security is guaranteed by the subjugation of all opposing forces under the authority of Christ (1.20-23).[183] However, their need to wear the armour of God in the battle against evil forces is paramount to stability in their standing with God (6.10-13). Mutual respect, tenderheartedness, forgiveness (4.32) and love (5.2) must therefore

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[180]See C.S. Keener, "Household Codes and Marriage," in *DNTB* on CD-ROM and also Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.1.2, 1252a; 1.5.6, 1260. See also Richard P. Saller, "Roman Kinship: Structure and Sentiment," in *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space* (eds. Beryl Rawson and Paul Weaver; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 7-34. They provide comprehensive discussion on how society was organized by kinship and the role kinship played in the social structure of Greco-Roman society.

[181]O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 212.

[182]See Pseudo-Isocrates, *Dem* 1-15.

[183]The discussion on spiritual warfare would indicate that their efforts through divine enabling are primarily geared towards sustainability (standing firm in their position) and not occupation of territories.

characterize their attitude towards one another.[184] Thus, their new identity as children of one father, the need for mutual respect, and kinship obligations towards siblings and the father underlies the fictive child-father relationship in the letter.

In a context of prayer, the author indicates that the father (πατήρ), to whom he prays, is also the one who named every family (πᾶσα πατριά) in heaven and on earth (3.14-15). The naming implies ownership and dominion over that which is named (cf. Gen 2.19-20; Ps 147.4; Isa 40.26). But does it imply God's fatherhood or sovereignty over every family? O'Brien explains that their very existence is purported to have been derived from God[185] while Hoehner suggests that the nuance is the 'sovereignty and fatherhood of God' over every family.[186] However, the view that 3.14-15 expresses the fatherhood of God may be reading too much into the text. God is only said to be the one who named them, and there is no further indication about whether by naming 'every family' he also assumed parental role.[187] Best argues that the author does not describe God "as the Father of every family in heaven or on earth but has said that God named them, so setting him in a closer and authoritative relationship."[188] The fatherhood of God over all is rather expressed elsewhere in 4.6, but here the issue is the sovereignty of God over every family, celestial or terrestrial. The power to name is indicative of his ownership and as being the one who bestows identity. Moreover, it also implies that God legitimizes 'family structures or order' outside the church as subject to God's

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[184]See Aasgaard, *My Beloved Brothers and Sisters,* 261-284. Aasgaard shows the ethical impetus of sibling language as it prompts attitudinal change and emphasizes what members share together.

[185]O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 256.

[186]Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 476 and Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 203. Lincoln supports the position that the open lines of the prayer in 3.14-21 expresses the fatherhood of God over every family in heaven and on earth. He asserts, "to extol God the Father as the father of all family groupings in heaven and on earth is to set his fatherhood in the context of creation and of the cosmos" (p. 203).

[187]See Abbott, *Ephesians and Colossians,* 94-95.

[188]Best, *Ephesians,* 339.

dominion. The author could therefore use conventional household structure or norms probably because they are also in conformity with God's design for household relationships.

Moreover, the church shares solidarity with Christ as children of one father. In other words, God is both their father (πατρὸς ἡμῶν) and the father of Jesus Christ (1.2-3). However, it is through the work of Christ that they have been given access to the Father (2.17). It is in this regard that Christ is a good moral example and worthy of emulation (5.2). Their current status renders the Gentiles' previous position as outsiders obsolete and accords them the right to be called συμπολῖται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ (2.19). In light of the wider context of 2.11-22, it is a place where God has reconciled Jews and Gentiles to live as one body in Christ. This 'household of God' is therefore characterized by unity, peaceful co-existence and a sense of belonging to God's new family. Elsewhere solidarity with Christ and the church is expressed in terms of **συνεζωοποίησεν** τῷ Χριστῷ ...καὶ **συνήγειρεν** and **συνεκάθισεν** ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις (2.5-6). Christ is often presented as an example and motivation for good behaviour (cf. 5.21-6.9).

Furthermore, the author uses sibling expressions to underscore the nature of relationship that should exist among believers. He refers to Tychicus as ὁ ἀγαπητὸς

ἀδελφός (6.21)[189] and his readers as τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς (6.23). The sibling metaphor would undoubtedly evoke positive response to interpersonal relationships in the church.[190]

> Sibling relationships were important in antiquity, with a central place in the family structure, carrying out vital tasks within the family and so linked to expectations of shared responsibility, loyalty, positive emotions, diversity, tolerance, forgiveness, concern for honour and harmony.[191]

Aasgaard argues that Paul uses this kinship language to prompt a behavioural response and "broadens the motivational basis for his ethics."[192] Thus, "*what* they are (i.e. siblings) has consequences for *how* they are, i.e. for the way in which they behave towards one another, and perhaps even for the way in which they behave vis-à-vis outsiders in the society in which they live."[193] The sibling language is not localized except the first reference to Tychicus; the general nature of the second reference implies that all believers should/could be perceived as such – anyone whatsoever, whenever they become part of the family of God through faith in Christ (2.8-10), gains this new identity. It is noteworthy that this notion of mutuality in kinship does not contravene the patriarchal structures of households, since one has to do with interpersonal relationship and the other, the line of authority.[194] Mutuality should not be confused with equality.[195]

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[189]Cf. Alanna Nobbs, "Beloved Brothers' in the NT and Early Christian World," in *The New Testament in its First Century Setting* (eds. P.J. Williams et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 143-150. It is noteworthy that Tychicus is the first individual to be referred to as 'beloved brother' in Paul (cf. Col 4.7 and Phlm 16).

[190]See P. Arzt-Grabner, "'Brothers' and 'Sisters' in Documentary Papyri and in Early Christianity," *RivB* 50 (2002):185-204. Arzt-Grabner examines Greek and Latin papyri and shows a wide range of metaphorical use of ἀδελφός to express mutual relationships.

[191]Reider Aasgaard, "Role Ethics in Paul: The Significance of the Sibling Role for Paul's Ethical Thinking," *NTS 48* (2002): 520. Aasgaard examines Paul's use of the brother/sister (sibling) metaphors in Rom. 12.1; 14-15, 1 Cor. 6 and 8, and 1 Thess. 4 to show that Paul employs the metaphors to depict the typical roles of natural siblings in antiquity. See Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 38-42.

[192]Aasgaard. "Role Ethics' in Paul," 513.

[193]Aasgaard, "Role Ethics in Paul," 517.

[194]*Contra* Horrell, "From ἀδελφοί to οἶκος Θεοῦ," 310. Cf. Andrew D. Clarke, "Equality or Mutuality? Paul's Use of 'Brother' Language," in *The New Testament in Its First Century Setting* (eds. P.J. Williams et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 157. Horrell has argued that the frequent appearances of ἀδελφοί (112 ca) in the undisputed Pauline letters, and its limited occurrences in

In summary, the fictive kinship lexemes in Ephesians depict God as the father of the community of believers and the church as 'beloved children' of God in solidarity with Christ. Their vertical relationship with God underpins their status as 'beloved children' and siblings whose horizontal relationship naturally ought to be cordial and affectionate. The fictive kinship language underlines the affectionate relationship with God (the father) and reaffirms their distinct identity as members of God's family. Moreover, this would be a good platform to build loving relationships and corporate solidarity.[196] This use of kinship language was not peculiar to the church in antiquity and as Meeks explains,

> The use of family terms to refer to members was not unknown in pagan clubs and cult associations, particularly in Rome and areas where Roman customs influenced the Greek

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Ephesians, Colossians and the Pastorals imply a transition from egalitarian to hierarchical communities in the post Pauline period. Horrell argues that "we might then broadly characterize this change as one from the model of egalitarian community of ἀδελφοί toward the model of a hierarchical household-community, a community with masters and subordinates, structured according to the relative positions of different groups." There are significant flaws with this assessment and social construction, especially as it relates to Ephesians. The first is methodological in nature. Horrell establishes his objective to focus his study on the metaphorical use of ἀδελφός **and** οἶκος and their cognates, but he is consistent with this approach only as far as the undisputed Pauline letters. Though the terms ἀδελφός **and** οἶκος do not appear in the household codes of Ephesians and Colossians, he is still able to compare his findings about ἀδελφός **and** οἶκος in the undisputed Pauline letters with explicit instructions on household relationships, not with metaphorical use of fictive kinship language in Ephesians or Colossians, in order to see a process from egalitarian to hierarchical social structures. For example, why did he not compare 1 Corinthians 7 with the household codes? The answer may be that a desired conclusion may not be reached. Second, Horrell's assessment of the household codes departs from their focus on domestic affairs to make it appear as a representation of social structures in the church. Third, a careful study of kinship lexemes in Ephesians, as I have shown above, indicates that their import is to promote a sense of belonging, mutuality and unified outlook in terms of the readers' relationship with God and with one another. Fourth, Ephesians refers to the believers similarly as ἀδελφοί in a context (6.21-24) that shows deep affection and solidarity that one finds in the use of ἀδελφοί in the undisputed Pauline letters. Fifth, as I have shown in my analysis of the household code, the patriarchal structure was simply the norm, and the code in Ephesians also seeks to promote concord in the household. Sixth, the notion that the use of ἀδελφοί is indicative of egalitarian communities in the undisputed Pauline churches is a misunderstanding of the difference between mutuality, affection and a sense of belonging in household relationships and the question of power, status or authority in the household. Andrew Clarke has rightly argued in response to Horrell that ἀδελφός language did not convey or suggest egalitarianism in the NT era (pp. 156-160). Arzt-Grabner, after analysing papyrological and literary evidence on ἀδελφός, aptly asserts that, "in both senses – the literal and metaphorical – 'brother' expresses closeness, solidarity and some kind of bond of engagement" (Arzt-Grabner, "'Brothers' and 'Sisters' in Documentary Papyri," 202).

[195]Cf. Clarke, "Equality or Mutuality?," 164.

[196]See also Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 86-88.

> associations. Most likely, however, the early Christians took their usage from the Jews. Not only were there biblical precedent referring to all Israel as brothers, a usage that continued in the Greek-speaking Diaspora, but that usage could be restricted to members of a purest sect, as we know from documents of Qumran.[197]

As I have shown above, the *Haustafel* promotes amicable relationships between its members with ethical values that are shared by other moralists. The fictive kinship does not contradict or override the natural family in the letter. The new identity of the believers and membership into the symbolic family of God does not require the abandonment of all natural family ties, unless it becomes necessary, as one finds in Mark and Matthew.[198] Conversely, its nuance for love and solidarity among members is consistent with the objective of the *Haustafel* in 5.21-6.9. The main import of the kinship language and the *Haustafel* is to promote concord and reinforce the readers' status in Christ. The micro household of the believers is placed within the framework of the macro household of God. Their solidarity with Christ and the need for concord is consistent in the understanding of kinship in the entire letter. The emphasis on their privileged identity as the reason and basis for conduct is also reaffirmed. Ephesians does not make an explicit reference to any socio-political implications of the household. However, it shows its ramifications for the church as a whole both through the nuances of the family of God (church) and through comparison of the wife-husband relationship to the Christ-church relationship (5.21-33). In other words, domestic ethics and moral obligations to members of the church are inseparable from other moral aspirations of

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[197]Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 87. Also Hos 1:10-2:1- 3 LXX; 1QS 6. 10, 22; 1QSa 1:18; 1QM 13.1.

[198]See Stephen C. Barton, *Discipleship and Family Ties in Mark and Matthew* (SNTSMS 80; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 57-225. Barton provides a very thoughtful and useful discussion on the cost of discipleship in Mark and Matthew as it relates to the natural family. He demonstrates the primacy of discipleship over family ties and redefinition of what constitutes the new family in these Gospels, but he also constantly draws his readers' attention to the fact that this is not intended to undermine the natural family as being irrelevant, though discipleship requires radical change even if it were to cost one his family.

God's (the father's) children. I therefore contend that it is this positive understanding of the household that the *Haustafel* seeks to promote and it is the basis for which the early church modelled itself after the 'family.' Thus, the social structure and relationships of an ideal household was perceived positively and as a useful convention to be observed by the church. Ephesians does not raise any doubt about the validity of the form or function of conventional household management but rather utilizes it to meet the ethical aspirations for the church.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The previous scholarly discussion on the household code established that it is derived from a conventional Greco-Roman topos 'concerning household management.' It is in this light that the *Haustafeln* in the NT and Ephesians in particular are understood to have adopted contemporary norms in the attempt to integrate the church into the wider society. Moreover, some (see above) have argued that it was adapted as 'a defensive posture'[199]or to demonstrate to the outside world that the church had no intention of disrupting the patriarchal/hierarchal structure of the household.[200] Thus, the church was ready to forfeit or compromise presumably an egalitarian stance in order to show that it upheld the ethos of the wider society. If these conclusions were right, then we might assume a church that had a separate code of conduct somewhere but which was ready to forfeit that in order to appease non-believing social critics. This would also suggest that the church was ready to be susceptible or even subject to the dictates of the outside world. However, I have argued that, though the household code shared the widespread norms in relation to household management, an interpretation that leads to

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[199]Osiek, "Family in Early Christianity," 23.

[200]See Standhartinger, "Origin and Intention," 127 and Johnson, "Ephesians," 338-342.

the above conclusions is quite foreign to what the text actually espouses in 5.21-6.9. I will now present some key observations on this matter.

Evidently, Ephesians shares the conventional norms of the household. Obviously, the author and his readers would be familiar with some aspects of conventional moral philosophy, rhetoric and ideological matrix of the culture. What Ephesians espouses would then be understood as an ideal praxis for the *oikos*, except that their new identity in Christ makes it mandatory to maintain the high moral standing in their household. In other words, there is no novelty in the substance of the household instruction for the believers. The distinctness lies in its Christological basis and framework. For instance, slavery is taken for granted as socially acceptable.[201] The believing slaves are admonished to discharge their duties in a good spirit and understand their task as 'the will of God' for them. MacDonald, among others, indicates that this validation of the practice of slavery should be seen as an attempt to encourage the readers to integrate into the wider culture, at least physically.[202] However, contrary to the view that the church is being instructed to negotiate its way back into the society, what our analysis shows is an admonition that absorbs or shares wider social values and norms. It is apparent that Ephesians' *Haustafel* does not alter the moral ideals but reinforces the significance of moral integrity and places them in a Christological framework as an essential part of what the church stands for. As Winter observes,

> There has been a tendency to overlook the fact that in the early empire, the Christian movement was not the only one that argued for a view of marriage and sexual morality where men and women operated with faithfulness and integrity against what had become a significant, alternative lifestyle for wives.[203]

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[201]See also Best, *Essays on Ephesians*, 197.
[202]MacDonald, "Citizens of Heaven," 289.
[203]Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows*, 74.

The social structure of households of the believers is therefore not expected to be any different from that of decent outsiders, as expressed by other moralists.

However, sharing the wider values is not akin to social compromise that relegates the essence of the believers' identity to the background, as is often implied. Unlike what one finds among Greek moralists, the code in Ephesians is shaped ideologically to befit the new identity of the believers. For instance, its socio-political implications are not mentioned. Conversely, the kinship lexemes and the analogy with Christ and the church rather indicate a link between the macro 'household of God' and the micro 'household' (domestic setting) of the believers. More so, the identity of believers as a distinctive group of people is implied in the basis, motivation and ethical model for the church (Christ). Instead of invoking tradition to require loyalty to the gods or civic responsibility, the scope of reference is the household of Spirit-filled believers.

Furthermore, the household code is an extension of the wise-folly antithesis (5.15-21) and forms part of the author's consistent rhetoric of differentiation and use of shared ethical values in 4.17-6.9. Specifically, the mutual submission of the Spirit-filled believers is directly connected to the ethical aspirations for the wife (5.21-24 is one sentence). This link could be further attested by the direct link of marriage and wise behaviour in contemporary Cynic-Stoic debates on whether or not the wise should marry. More so, the sole attention to what is expected from believers in 5.19-21 is carried over to the entire household code (5.22-6.9). The code therefore indicates how mutual submission among Spirit-filled believers ought to express itself in their households, thereby serving as part of the author's wider instruction on differentiation

and his Christocentric framework. Moreover, the wife-husband relationship alludes to the salvific work of Christ and Christ's relationship to the church, where all members acknowledge Christ as their Lord (5.21), the motivation, reason and model for behaviour. It is also in light of orderly and harmonious relationships that the notion of the church as the 'household of God' has crucial ethical significance. There is no evidence that the appearance of the *Haustafel* in Ephesians is necessitated by the need to appease the outside world, integrate the church into society or curb potential accusations. Neither is there evidence that they were to compromise their status in Christ in order to integrate into the outside world. Thus, the view that the *Haustafel* is intended to have integrative function in Ephesians lacks evidence.

In conclusion, the *Haustafel* in Ephesians does not have an apologetic function. Moreover, its structure was the common sense of the era, and Ephesians does not suggest a departure from another structure elsewhere in order to adapt this particular one. The substance of ethics or values being promoted in the household code is also shared by other moralists in the era. Furthermore, there is no explicit injunction on interaction with unbelievers, and neither do we find what Zetterholm calls 'identificational assimilation,' where members fully integrate into society and forgo all their distinctive features or forfeit their identity as believers in Christ.[204] They are to maintain their identity or place in Christ while observing shared ethical values in their household; to conduct themselves in a manner that will promote solidarity in the church and mutuality in their households.

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[204]Zetterholm, *Formation of Christianity in Antioch*, 69.

Chapter 5

THEOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION FOR DIFFERENTIATION AND THE USE OF SHARED ETHICAL VALUES

The previous analysis has shown that the author uses a consistent rhetoric of differentiation throughout the paraenesis and ethical values that were shared by other Greco-Roman moralists. This chapter provides theological and social-scientific explanation for the rhetoric of differentiation and the use of shared ethical values in light of our subject matter. First, I will examine the theological features that help to engender the distinct identity of the readers and explore some ideological features purporting the insider-outsider contrast. The theological rationale, implicit or explicit, underlying the author's use of shared moral values and his depiction of God's vision for the cosmos will also be considered. Second, social identity theory will be utilized to explain the nature and import of the author's social strategy. Specifically, the cognitive, emotional and evaluative dimensions of identity formation will be employed to shed light on the author's construction of the moral identity of his readers.

5.1 THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR DIFFERENTIATION AND THE USE OF SHARED ETHICAL VALUES

Previous analysis has repeatedly noted the way ethics is shaped around positive identity construction of the addressees in Ephesians. The identity, basis and motivation for ethics are all grounded in theological statements that underpin their new status in Christ. This theological framework underscores the purpose, scope and parameters for praxis. In this section, I will examine (a) the theological features that engender the distinctiveness of

the readers, (b) some ideological/theological features that harness duality in its framework and (c) the theological rationale for the author's use of shared ethical values.

5.1.1 DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY AND ETHOS

The notion that the readers are distinct and faithful is noted at the beginning of the letter (1.1-3). This new status has its origin in God's plan to draw people to himself through the salvific work of Christ. The author employs the language of differentiation to distinguish them from outsiders and to mark a radical departure from their previous way of life. They were chosen (1.4), redeemed (1.7) and called (1.18; 4.1) to become a new community in Christ. They are *novi homines* and set apart from outsiders. However, this does not require physical relocation of any sort but an ideological sense of distinctiveness. As Horrell explains, such language "may be understood as an attempt to reinforce a strong sense of positive group identity, and to strengthen the sense of distinction in terms of a boundary between insiders and outsiders."[1] The newness of who they are is more pronounced in the concept of new creation. The author uses κτίζω[2] only in the verb form to connote God's agency and act of creation of the church (2.10; 2.15; 3.9;4.24). This is not a re-creation of the cosmos but creation of a new community - it is anthropocentric in its import (Rom 14.20 and Phil 1.6). The believers' salvific status is God's workmanship ([ποίημα] Ps 91.4; 142.5; Rom.1.20), which he created (κτίζω) in Christ (2.10. Cf. Gal 6.15 and 2 Cor 5.17). Thus, newness is marked by "the creation of a new humanity as men and women were brought to that destiny God

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[1]Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference,* 138.

[2]Edward Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul's Cosmological Language* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 77-80. Adams examines the linguistic background of κτίσις/κτίζω especially as it relates to God's act of creation. He has demonstrated the significance thereof in our understanding of cosmology in the undisputed Pauline letters. However, Ephesians uses the word mainly to express the formation of the church as God's new creation – anthropocentric nuance.

had purposed but which before Christ had not been reached."[3] The concept of new creation reappears in 2.15 to reaffirm their new status as one entity in Christ (whether Jew or Greek) vis-à-vis their previous way of life, which was characterized by disparity between Jews and Gentiles. Furthermore, they are created anew to bear a distinctive outlook that is marked by God's moral image (4.24). This is to say that the new humanity as *imago Dei* resurfaces (cf. 1.26) in the second creation.

The new creation in Ephesians is God's creation of a community that transcends ethnic boundaries. The Pauline notion of the church as a new creation is implied here in Ephesians (cf. 2 Cor 5.17).[4] However, this is neither *creatio ex nihilo* nor *continua creatio* but creation *out of the old existence* or *the world* - people are saved (2.8-10), chosen (1.4) or called (1.18; 4.1) out of the world. The author indicates that it is for this reason that their conduct ought to be compatible with their new status (2.24; 4.1). The creation motif in the letter shows that (a) this new creation has always been a part of God's plan; (b) it is not *creatio ex nihilo* but creation from the 'old.' The accent on newness is indicative of a departure from an old and negative state to a new and positive one; (c) the locus of this new creation is 'in Christ'; and (d) the new creation manifests itself through a new *modus vivendi* (2.10, 4.24). However, this newness has no obvious visible marks to distinguish the readers from others but one that is ideological in nature - a paradigm shift that needs to manifest itself in exemplary *modus vivendi.*

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[3]Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 114. See also N. A. Dahl, "Christ, Creation, and the Church," in *The Background to New Testament and Its Eschatology* (eds. W. D. Davies and D. Daube; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956): 422-443.

[4]See Daniel Darko, "The Concept of Reconciliation in the Corpus Paulinum: Two Dimensions of Authentic Relationship," *TJCT* XIV.1 (2004): 28-29. I have shown that the Pauline concept of new creation has a transitory character, where creation is a transformation and transition of negative status into a new one. God is the agent of Paul's new creation and the formula ἐν Χριστῷ is usually employed to indicate the locus of the new creation in Paul. Thus, the newness is ideological, soteriological or ecclesiological in nature.

Christology stands at the heart of the believers' identity construct. The author presents himself as an apostle of Christ Jesus (1.1),[5] a prisoner of Christ (3.1) and a prisoner of the Lord (4.1). He indicates that the God who initiated the salvific plan is also the father of 'our Lord Jesus Christ' (1.3). Similarly, the readers are referred to as πιστοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (1.1),[6] thereby implying a shared identity and solidarity with the author and his readers. The author's relationship with Tychicus, a 'beloved brother' and 'faithful minister' (6.21), is also characterized by shared allegiance to Christ. Moreover, the recruitment of membership is depicted as an adoption into God's household through Christ (1.5; cf. Jn 1.12). Matera rightly observes that,

> The role of Christ is absolutely integral to the mystery of God's will. Repeatedly employing the preposition 'in' (*en*), Paul notes that God has blessed the Ephesians *in* Christ (1.3), and elected them *in* him (1.4). *In* his Beloved he bestowed grace upon them (1.6), and *in* him they received redemption (1.7). *In* Christ, God has set forth his favour (1.9), for he had determined to sum up everything *in* Christ, whether in heaven or on earth (1.10). Therefore *in* Christ the Ephesians were chosen (1.11), for they first hoped *in* him (1.12), and *in* him they heard the whole truth (1.13).[7]

Thus, their status in Christ sets them apart from those without Christ.

Moreover, the uniqueness of the church is marked by the work of God through Christ (1.3). Christ is noted as the head of the church (1.23; 4.15) while the church is portrayed as the body of Christ (1.23; 4.12).[8] Their blessing (1.3), selection (1.4), and forgiveness (1.7) are mediated through Christ. This distinction is reiterated by the

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[5]O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 84.

[6]Ernest Best, *One Body in Christ: A Study in the Relationship of the Church to Christ in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul* (London: SPCK, 1955), 1. Best establishes several categories in which the phrase 'in Christ' is used in Paul. He asserts that the category in which Eph 1.1b belongs has local flavour.

[7]Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 148. Cf. C.F.D. Moule, *The Origins of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 54-69.

[8]See Hanna Roose, "Die Hierarchisierung der Leib-Metapher im Kolosser- und Epheserbrief als Paulinisierung: Ein Beitrag zur Rezeption Paulinischer Tradition in Pseudo-Paulinischen Briefen," *NovT* XLVII, 2 (2005):117-141. Roose argues that the Body of Christ language, which is understood to have more egalitarian or democratic nuance (p. 118) in the undisputed Pauline corpus, is adopted to present a hierarchy of Christ over the church and the church over the world in the deutero-Pauline writings. This position is however debatable.

notion that Christ is the locus/sphere in which the believers have their existence (2.12-13). The phrase 'in Christ' features regularly with a local flavour[9] as the realm or sphere of the church vis-à-vis the outside world. It is 'in Christ' that access to the father is made possible (2.18) and one's ability to approach God in boldness and confidence is also contingent upon faith in Christ (3.12). More so, Christ is the one through whom the Jew-Gentile disparity is neutralized and reconciliation actualized (2.14-16). God's eternal purpose for the church will also be established 'in Christ' (3.3-4.11). The 'in Christ' formula sometimes "indicates Christ as the channel through whom God works his will, elects, redeems, forgives, blesses, imparts new life, builds the church."[10] He is also exalted above all diabolic powers and guarantees the church's security over their influence (1.20-22). The architectural imagery of the church (2.19-22) further indicates that the foundation, structure and sustainability of the church are all established in Christ. It is therefore the author's prayer that Christ occupy the members' hearts (3.17) and be glorified forever (3.30). Christology is therefore a major marker of distinction as well as the basis, model and motivation for praxis.

The author further employs symbolic language (i.e. imagery or metaphor) and other devices to generate a sense of belonging, community and shared identity in Christ. He uses metaphors (body, family) and sacred symbols (holy temple) to reinforce their union and uniqueness. He employs fictive kinship lexemes to promote mutuality in the symbolic household of God (cf. 2.19). This notion is later reinforced by the call to understand the commonalities they share as the basis for unity in the church – one body,

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[9]I have found no consistent pattern to suggest that ἐν Χριστῷ or its antecedent always have a local flavour in Ephesians. Sometimes it also makes sense to take it as instrumental.

[10]Allan, "The 'In Christ' Formula in Ephesians," 59. Allan is more inclined to think that the formula always has instrumental as opposed to local flavour, but the majority of commentators and scholars would not subscribe to such claim.

one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father (4.4-6). As beloved children of God and beneficiaries of the love of Christ, they are entreated to express similar affection towards one another (5.1,2).

Furthermore, the author uses 'body' language (τὸ σῶμα or τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ) ten times[11] to mark one identity and one community in Christ (4.16). Horrell indicates that the 'bodily union with Christ' helps to "underpin a sense of distinct Christian identity and to motivate and legitimate ethical norms and specific patterns of behaviour."[12] The sense of oneness in Ephesians is more emphatic in the phrase ἑνὶ σώματι (2.16). Sellin reckons that this is the 'prime maxim' of the letter.[13] The idea that the church is ἕν σῶμα will enhance group mentality, internal cohesion and interdependence. Unlike other Pauline letters (except Colossians), the 'body' metaphor is used solely for the union of believers in Ephesians (cf. 1 Cor 12).[14] The depiction of the church as a 'body' with Christ as its source of growth, its head and the one who fills it (1.22-23) suggests a living relationship[15] with Christ on whom it will continue to depend for life and power to function in one accord. Elsewhere, the believers are said to share solidarity with Christ (2.5-6).

However, the church as ἕν σῶμα in the wider context of 2.11-22 has prompted a discussion on whether it implies that Gentiles are being added to Jews (people of God)

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[11]Ephesians 1.22-23; 2.16; 3.6; 4.4, 12, 16; 5.23, 29.

[12]Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference,* 163.

[13]Sellin, "Die Paränese des Epheserbriefes," 296. It must however be noted that Sellin argues that this oneness is encouraged as an ecclesiastical counter-model to disunity in the Roman empire. He also interprets Ephesians from the lenses of Colossians.

[14]See Ernst Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM, 1969), 118, 102-121.Cf. George Howard, "The Head/Body Metaphors of Ephesians," *NTS* 20 (1973/74): 355. Käsemann provides comprehensive discussion on the feature of the phrase the 'body of Christ' in the undisputed Pauline letters.

[15]P. T. O'Brien, "Church" in *DPL* on *CD-ROM.* Version 1.0, 2001.

in fulfilment of God's promises[16] or serves to depict the church as a new entity comprising the two. Martin argues that the church is not made up of Gentile incorporation into a Jewish religious movement but a union of people from different strands and ethnic backgrounds to become members of God's household.[17] This does not suggest that individual ethnicity has been relinquished.[18] The nuance is that ethnoracial identity is rather "subsumed under a higher name, 'one new person'" (2.15).[19] The church does not replace Israel and neither does it trace its origin to Israel's salvation history in Ephesians.[20] Lincoln rightly points out that it is a brand new entity.[21] This understanding of the church is very crucial in how the author establishes its distinct identity.

> Jews were able to become part of this new people, but now on the same terms as Gentiles. Those who were near and who receive the peace proclaimed to them enter, along with those who were far off and who receive the same proclamation, into God's new community, in which, though the law has been abolished, the Scriptures, seen in the light of the new situation in Christ, can still function as authoritative tradition (cf.17).[22]

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[16]See Yee, *Jews, Gentiles and Ethnic Reconciliation.* Yee's entire work is devoted to this subject.

[17]Ralph P. Martin, "Reconciliation and Unity in Ephesians," *RevExp* 93 (1996): 205-206.

[18] Also David E. Garland, "A Life Worthy of the Calling: Unity and Holiness in Ephesians 4:1-24," *ResExp* 76 (1976):521.

[19]Martin, "Reconciliation and Unity in Ephesians," 206. See also Andre Resner, Jr., "Maintain the Broken Wall: Ephesians 2:14-18," *ResQ* 32.2 (1990):121-125. It is however important to note that Martin seems to struggle with the place of Israel's heritage in the formation of the church. On one hand he sees the church as a new entity comprising Jews and Gentiles but on the other hand the church is supposed not to be separated from Israel. Contrary to Martin's stance, the church in Ephesians does not emerge as a continuum from Israel's covenant status.

[20]*Contra* Markus Barth, "Conversion and Conversation: Israel and the Church in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians," *Int* 17 (1963): 3-24 and Markus Barth, *The People of God* (JSNTS 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1983), 9-25. See Nils Alstrup Dahl, "Gentiles, Christians, and Israelites in the Epistle to the Ephesians," *HTR* 79 (1986): 36-38 and Helmut Merklein, *Christus und die Kirche: Die Theologische Grundstruktur des Epheserbriefes nach Eph 2, 11-18* (SBS 66; Stuttgart: KBW Verlag, 1973), 72-76.

[21]Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Church and Israel in Ephesians 2," *CBQ* 49 (1987): 605-624. Lincoln argues against Markus Barth's position that the church is a substitution of Israel and incorporation of Gentiles into Israel. He aptly demonstrates that such continuity is not present in Ephesians though one may find it in Rom 9-11 or in Galatians.

[22]Lincoln, "The Church and Israel in Ephesians 2," 616-617. *Contra* Margaret Y. MacDonald, "The Politics of Identity in Ephesians," *JSNT* 26.4 (2004):432-437. MacDonald establishes the dating of Ephesians to the reign of Domitian and constructs a historical scenario where the church was under some form of threat and needed a 'security cover' from their Jewish counterparts, whose religion was legitimized in the empire, in order to operate safely in Asia Minor. She finds ambiguity in the boundaries

Unlike Rom 9-11, Ephesians does not trace the foundation of the church to Jewish heritage nor give Jews any prerogative. The church is established through God's work in Christ, and its members were chosen before the foundation of the world (1.4). Its identity and essence are shaped by this sense of newness embedded in the work of God through Christ. Gentile readers could then be at ease that their election and participation in the new community is not by coincidence but has always been a part of God's plan. The 'seal of the Spirit' is an important identity marker that guarantees all members an inheritance in God (1.13-14 cf. 4.30) – not Abrahamic heritage. In the meantime, their new status comes along with moral obligations (ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους [1.4] and ἔργοις ἀγαθοῖς [2.10]) to enhance solidarity and to advance God's plan for the world. This sense of distinctiveness and union in/with Christ is sustainable only by living in a manner that befits this new status (4.1-3). The author therefore clarifies their identity and moral boundaries with the rhetoric of differentiation.

Moreover, the term ἐκκλησία is used solely in the singular[23] probably to depict the church as one distinct entity regardless of location or ethnic composition. This has been referred to as the 'universal church in Ephesians'[24] but one must not confuse this

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between Jews and believers in Ephesians, and suggests that a polemic could be deduced from 2.11-22 in relation to socio-political struggles of the church. She asserts that, "church members would face difficult questions from both Jews and Gentiles outside the church about their civic loyalties and association with Judaism. They would be badly in need of justification for a way of life that could see them swept along in oppressive imperial measures or perhaps, even worse, harassed as Christians with no legitimate status in the empire at all; but there would also have been times when it would be advantageous to be seen as falling under the umbrella of a strong well-established Jewish community" (p. 437). First, the entire argument rests on the dating of Ephesians which is not settled. Second, the exegesis that led to the conclusion is undoubtedly debatable. Third, the suggestion that the believers wanted to hide behind Jews for security reasons suggests that they were ready to compromise their faith and perhaps deny their allegiance to Christ when they encountered threat. MacDonald does not realize that the hypothesis she builds is contrary to what we know of the early church's attitude towards persecution.

[23]Ephesians 1.22; 3.10, 21; 5.23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32.

[24]See Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1980), 47. Banks has argued that universal church has a form of dualism to it in Ephesians. He asserts that it refers "both to

with 'universal salvation.'[25] One deals with ecclesiology and the other with soteriology and eschatology. The exclusive use of ἐκκλησία as a universal church in Ephesians[26] may also be understood either as an attempt to encourage receptivity in a broader spectrum or to promote oneness in Christ. As Abbot explains,

> We notice that the writer never speaks of local churches, but only of the (one) church. This has been supposed to indicate that he wrote at a time when several local churches were drawing together in resistance to a common danger, and binding themselves together by a single organization. But the church here is not represented as made up of individual churches, but of individual men; nor is there any mention of external unity or common organization.[27]

The ἐκκλησία occupies a privileged and matchless position in relation to the 'principalities and powers' (1.22 and 3.10) and as the main beneficiary of the exalted position of Christ over the powers (1.21-22). In other words, Christ's exaltation and supremacy provide assurance of victory over evil spiritual forces for the church.[28] More so, the unification of Jews and Gentiles in the ἐκκλησία is a visible manifestation of the manifold wisdom of God to the powers whose efforts to create disparity have been thwarted – this is a mystery (3.9-10).[29] In other words, God's purpose for the cosmos is now being made manifest to the powers through a unified and multiethnic church.[30] The doxology in 3.20 further indicates that the ἐκκλησία is the place where God is glorified.

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the heavenly church which is permanently in session and to a local church which, though regularly meets, is intermittent in character." This idea, which emerged from earlier speculations on cosmic ecclesiology, has died a natural death since it can hardly be substantiated on the basis of critical textual analysis.

[25]The concept of 'universal church' in Ephesians means there is no reference to a particular local congregation but the church in general. However, 'universal salvation' addresses how 'all' are being saved or will be saved in the salvific plan of God. The term is antithetical to the 'particularistic' view that limits salvation to only those who believe in Christ. In other words, 'universal church' implies constituted churches worldwide, whereas 'universal salvation' addresses who gets saved in the end.

[26]Cf. 1 Cor 15.9; Gal 1. 13; Phil 3.6; 1 Cor 12.28; Col 1.18, 24.

[27]Abbot, *Ephesians and Colossians,* xix.

[28]Arnold, *Power and Magic,* 56.

[29]See Roy Yates, "A Re-examination of Ephesians 1:23," *ET* 83 (1971-72): 150.

[30]Lincoln and Wedderburn, *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters,* 93 and Clinton E. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul's Letters* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1992), 194-197. Arnold counteracts various attempts to demythologize the powers and argues that the language in 3.10 and elsewhere in Ephesians deals with what were perceived to be real evil spiritual powers in the readers' milieu.

The mutuality of the ἐκκλησία and her Lord has already been discussed in the previous chapter on the household code (5.23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32).

Furthermore, the distinct outlook of the church is expressed metaphorically as a sacred symbol – a holy temple. In Christ, the church enjoys growth and unity to become ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ (2.21). The expression ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ implies that which is sacred and distinct (holy or set apart) in the Lord. The sacred imagery embodies the uniqueness and union of the believers (4.12-13). It is not an individual affair but a scenario where the entire church matures to become[31] or arrive at what can be characterized (ethically) as a 'holy temple' (cf. Isa 66.18–20; cf. Isa 2.1–5; Mic 4.1–5).[32] This notion of purity is consistent with the depiction of their moral image as ὁσιότης and δικαιοσύνη (4.24), and the purpose of their calling to be ἅγιος and ἄμωμος (1.4). Elsewhere, the author appeals to their status as ἅγιοι (5.3) as the basis for which they should distance themselves from impure living. Consequently, 4.17-6.9 makes a consistent insider-outsider contrast to clarify their moral boundaries and distinctiveness vis-à-vis outsiders (cf. 4.17-24; 5.6-21). His ingroup-outgroup differentiation is not only a strategy to accentuate the differences between 'us' and 'them' but its theological impetus also underlines his ecclesiastical and Christological framework. Thus, the author's rhetoric of differentiation is meant to establish the identity and moral boundaries for the new community in Christ.

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[31]Paul D. Simmons, "The Grace of God and The Life of the Church: Ephesians 2," *RevExp* 76 (1976): 504 -505.

[32]This imagery seems to be an allusion to the OT where nations will be assembled in the temple to worship and pray in the eschaton (Isa 66.18–20; cf. Isa 2.1–5; Mic 4.1–5). See Derwood C. Smith, "Cultic Language in Ephesians 2.19-22: A Test Case," *ResQ* 31.4 (1989):507-517 and Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Cultic Language in Qumran and in the NT," *CBQ* (1979):159-177. Smith argues that this depiction of the church is dependent on the Qumran tradition but Fiorenza insists that there is no evidence to that effect. We know that temple imagery is common in DSS and other Jewish literature, and the Jewish author may just be alluding to a common tradition.

5.1.2 IDEOLOGICAL DUALITIES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EPHESIANS

N.T. Wright has argued that the term 'dualism' is often used for a wide range of issues that may or may not reflect the true meaning of the word in biblical theology. He explains that, "several of the things which are asserted to be 'dualistic' are perfectly normal features of most if not all Biblical theology."[33] He therefore calls for the need to make clear distinction between dualities, as general expressions denoting 'two parts or elements' and dualisms (two conceptually opposed and contrasted elements).[34] Wright argues that while all dualisms embody dualities, every form of duality should not necessarily be equated with or described as a dualism. He outlines ten dualities that are often referred to as dualisms and suggests that only three of them bear dualistic features.[35] I do not intend to devote more space to discussion on the semantic range of dualities and dualisms. However, I acknowledge the ambiguities in the use of the term dualism in modern biblical scholarship. I will therefore refer to 'dualities' in Ephesians and in this particular discussion. I will use the term dualism only where its qualifying adjective leaves no sense of ambiguity in this section.

Apart from the rhetoric of differentiation and the virtue-vice device, Ephesians sets its readers apart by presenting their current status vis-à-vis outsiders in the form of theological or ideological dualities. This is more evident in the world-construction, especially in the use of the word κόσμος. The world-construction is an integral part of the intergroup differentiation and how the author promotes positive identity in his

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[33]Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 253.

[34]It is noteworthy that the *Oxford English Dictionary* does not make such a distinction, but Wright seems to be right in the way the term is often loaded with concepts that needs to be unpacked or where its nuance seems to be ambiguous in theological discussions.

[35]Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 252-257.

readership.[36] Brown points out that "intergroup comparison is critical for us because indirectly it contributes to our own self-esteem. If our own group can be perceived as clearly superior on some dimension of value (like skill or sociability) then we, too, can bask in that reflected glory."[37] The depiction of the κόσμος vis-à-vis the believers' status in Christ seems to follow this path.

Κόσμος appears three times in Ephesians (1.4, 2.2, 2.12) first in a eulogy where God is praised for their privileged election (ἐκλέγω). The readers were chosen πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου partially for an ethical reason – to be holy and blameless (1.4).[38] Κόσμος is used here to indicate the timing of God's redemptive plan (Gen 1, 2) but in 2.1-10, κόσμος is contrasted with the current state of the readers. Their past and the current position of outsiders are portrayed as κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα[39] τοῦ **κόσμου** τούτου and the domain where cosmic evil powers exert their influence. The κόσμος is characterized by moral failure, as the current domain of outsiders and a place where τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος are operative (2.1-3). This negative depiction of the κόσμος is immediately preceded by the notion that Christ has been given dominion over the powers for the church (1.20-22). 'This world' (2.2) is therefore not where the believers

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[36]Giles, "Linguistic Differentiation in Ethnic Groups," 385.

[37]Rupert Brown, *Group Processes: Dynamics within and between Groups* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 239.

[38]The theme of election and its ethical goal in 1.4 is resumed in 4.1 to commence the main ethical section of the epistle. It is noteworthy that the origin of the church is neither linked to Abrahamic heritage nor a particular salvation history – a notion that is sometimes carried into the interpretation of 2.11-22. The origin and identity of the church is simply a new creation of God.

[39]The issue of whether αἰών has a temporal or spatial connotation is unsettled. Schnackenburg (p. 91) and Best (*Ephesians*, 203-204) have argued that the term refers to a personal evil spiritual power thereby having a spatial connotation. Best contends that "the devil had many names in contemporary Judaism and early Christianity and the adoption of the name of a pagan god or evil power would not be unexpected, especially since 'this aeon' already possessed evil connotation" (p. 204). In their commentaries, both Lincoln (p. 95) and O'Brien (pp. 158-159) have suggested that it could be understood to have both spatial and temporal connotations since αἰών and κόσμος convey similar ideas. I have argued elsewhere (Darko, "The Role Spiritual Beings in Relation to Ethics," 57-61) that the temporal idea is more likely, pointing to life that is lived 'according to the age of this world' – not a spiritual force serving as a standard of ethics. The spatial idea is rather in the next clause where spiritual beings are explicitly named.

are in Christ. While physically believers and unbelievers may dwell in the same vicinity, town or village, there is a spatial duality that implies 'two worlds' in which forces of evil are operative in the realm of unbelievers while the believers live in Christ. Forbes has argued that the closest parallel to the view that there are two active and opposing spiritual forces in the cosmos in Pauline demonology and cosmology (including Ephesians) is found in middle Platonism, especially in Philo and Plutarch.[40] He also argues that the notion that good and evil spiritual forces operate in the cosmos (apart from the material world) was widespread, especially in middle Platonism.[41] For example, Plutarch explains that,

> Nature brings nothing which is not combined with something else, we may assert that it is not one keeper of two great vases who, after the manner of a barmaid, deals out to us our failures and successes in a mixture, but it has come about, as a result of two opposed principles and two antagonistic forces, one of which guides us along a straight course to the right, while the other turns us aside and backward, that our life is complex, and so also is the universe (κόσμος)…The great majority and wisest men hold this opinion: they believe that there are two gods, rivals as it were, the one the Artificer of good and the other of evil. There are also those who called the better one a god (Θεός) and the other a daemon (δαίμονα), as, for example, Zoroaster the sage, who they record, lived five thousand years before the time of the Trojan War. He called the one Oromazes and the other Areimanius; and he further declared that among all other things perceptible to the senses, Oromazes may be best compared to light, and Araimanius, conversely, to

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[40]Chris Forbes, "Paul's Demonology and/or Cosmology? Principalities, Powers and the Elements of the World in their Hellenistic Context," *JSNT* 85 (2002): 51-73. See also Keimpe Algra, "The Beginnings of Cosmology," in *Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy* (A.A. Long; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 45-65. Algra presents the development of ancient Greek cosmology in a chronological order. The entire article of Forbes is devoted to providing evidence to the effect that such cosmic dualism was commonplace in ancient philosophy after the fifth century BCE. He concludes his analysis with theses words, "I do not wish to suggest that Paul formally studied philosophy or is *au fait* with the technicalities of Middle Platonic cosmological thinking. I would argue, rather, that he is working creatively between the angelology and demonology of his Jewish heritage, and world-view of the thoughtful Graeco-Roman philosophical amateur. Neither do I think that he does this simply for the sake of communication, searching for toeholds in the world-view of his audience. Rather I suggest that Paul, himself in part a product of decades of intelligent engagement with Hellenistic Judaism and Graeco-Roman culture, is here working towards his own synthesis" (p. 73). It is important to note that Forbes includes Ephesians in his references to Paul's cosmology as it relates to the powers.

[41]Forbes, "Paul's Demonology and/or Cosmology?," 55. See also J. M. Dillion, *The Middle Platonists* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1977), 161-166. Forbes demonstrates the widespread usage of ἀρχή and δύναμις, common Pauline terminology for principalities and powers, in the context of cosmology or demonology in Philo, Plutarch and other Greek writings (p. 71). Also Plutarch, *Mor.* 369B, Philo, *Post Cain,* 20; *Gig,* 16-17; *Spec. Leg.* 1.66; *Plant.* 14;*Conf.Ling.* 171-175.

> darkness and ignorance...Oromazes, born from the purest light, and Areimanius, born from darkness, are constantly at war with each other.[42]

Ephesians indicates not only that the state of the believers is different from that of outsiders but that they are also waging war against the evil spiritual forces in their current standing with God (6.10-20). Brown points out that the warfare scenario or instigation for some form of conflict between insiders and outsiders, as we have here, is usually instrumental in enhancing ingroup solidarity.

> The group and the people in it come to matter more to the group members... The relation of comradeship and peace in the we-group and that of hostility and war towards other-groups are correlative of each other. The exigencies of war with outsiders are what make peace inside, lest internal discord should weaken the we-group for war.[43]

The duality between the powers and Christ that we find in 1.20-2.3 indicates that the world from which the believers are saved is under the dominion of diabolic powers and tainted by moral failure. Conversely, the readers are saved by grace to exhibit sound behaviour (2.8-10). Conversion is therefore a transition from the dominion of one cosmic ruler to another, from deadness to sin to uprightness, and from being τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς (2.2-3) to becoming τέκνα ἀγαπητά (5.1).

A systematic depiction of the transition from 'then' to 'now' and ingroup-outgroup differentiation are carefully given in 2.1-22. In a soteriological contrast, the pre-conversion past is characterized by hopelessness, division and moral failure (2.1; 2.12) vis-à-vis salvation in Christ Jesus (2.4-10). The nature of relationships in this new community therefore transcends previous interethnic differences between Jews and

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[42]Plutarch, *Mor.* 369. Plutarch argues that the notion that there are two antagonistic spiritual powers (good and bad) in the universe is shared by other cultures, though different cultures may refer to them by different names. He uses the Egyptians as an example, explaining their cosmology as it relates to spiritual powers in the cosmos as bearing similar features as that of the Greek (*Mor.* 375-376).

[43]Brown, *Group Processes*, 200.

Gentiles (2.11-22).[44] Outside the church, Jews and Gentile unbelievers may have their differences, but those who are in Christ now share one identity and have a common objective in life. The contrast of ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ (2.12) and νυνὶ δὲ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is indicative of the difference and radical change of status. Here κόσμος is contrasted with ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. The outside world is χωρὶς Χριστοῦ (2.12) whereas their new status is said to have taken effect ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστου (2.13). Christ is therefore the mark for exclusion (2.12) and inclusion (2.13). However, this is ideological distinction grounded in religious ethos to prompt the sense of privileged 'us-insiders' and the underprivileged 'them-outsiders.'

5.1.3 THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE FOR SHARED ETHICAL VALUES

To a large extent the moral ideals of Ephesians are values that are shared by other moralists in its milieu. However, the author does not make explicit acknowledgement that these values are shared by the wider society (at least the elite) from whom he seeks to differentiate his readers. So, can we find any theological rationale for his use of these shared values? Are there any features in his theological framework to suggest that he sees the outside world as having a part in the plan of God? Admittedly, there is little evidence of explicit attestation to that effect, but it is also true that overt acknowledgement could have been counterproductive in the strategy to promote distinct moral identity of the ingroup vis-à-vis outgroupers.[45] I will endeavour to show two main

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[44]*Contra* Tet-Lim N. Yee, *Jews, Gentiles and Ethnic Reconciliation: Paul's Jewish Identity and Ephesians* (SNTSMS 130; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), 222-228. Yee argues that this oneness should not be understood in terms of the church being a new entity apart from Jewish community but rather a form of Jewish Messianic inclusiveness.

[45]Unlike Philo and some other Jewish writers who acknowledge Greek writers in the attempt to create universal level ground with regard to ethics, Ephesians does not overtly acknowledge its use of traditional ethical material. Contrary to Jewish writers' universal perspective, Ephesians rather emphasizes the distinctiveness of its readers and the ethics it espouses.

areas in which the author seems to provide theological impetus to justify the notion that the outside world is part of the wider vision of God, which will also imply that he would not expect his readers to withdraw or be socially separated from them under such circumstances. The two areas are (a) his legitimating of conventional household patterns and (b) the universal perspective or vision of God's plan for the world.

First, the author gives Christological endorsement to conventional household structure/norms and deems it suitable for his ecclesiological framework, since they are legitimated by God (3.15). He indicates in 3.14-15 that God is the πατήρ from whom πᾶσα πατριά in heaven and on earth are named. The 'naming' implies God's dominion, sovereignty and ownership hence the family structure, as the readers knew it, derives its status from God. In this light, 'every family' reflects God's design for the household in his providential arrangement of the world and its affairs. Therefore, a commendable household structure and conduct (e.g. among the elite) could not be any different from the ethical prescriptions for the believers, since they all meet God's approval. Moreover, God's universal fatherhood is stated in 4.6 to denote his sovereignty over all. There is an unsettled debate about whether the adjective qualifying the 'father' (πατὴρ πάντων) in 4.6 is neuter or masculine. Some scholars read πατὴρ πάντων as masculine to imply an ecclesiological scope where God's fatherhood is exercised over believers[46] but others adopt a neuter reading to denote a cosmological reference to God's sovereignty and immanence in the universe.[47] In fact, the repetitive use of the adjective in 4.6 (four times) seems to imply an allusion to a liturgical formula or a maxim about the God of the universe. Marcus Aurelius, though second century CE, explains the

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[46]Schnackenburg, *Ephesians,* 167 and Hoehner, *Ephesians,* 519.
[47]Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 240, Best, *Ephesians,* 371, O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 285-286, Perkins, *Ephesians,* 97, Muddiman, *Ephesians,* 185-186 and MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians,* 289.

relationship of God and the κόσμος in a similar language as one finds here in Ephesians.[48] Moreover, the adjective often appears in neuter in Ephesians with cosmological connotation (e.g.1.10, 11, 23; 4.10). Furthermore, the comprehensive nature in which 4.6 portrays God (πατὴρ πάντων, ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ διὰ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν) suggests a reference to his sovereignty and immanence in the entire world. As O'Brien rightly puts it, "Paul is affirming that God is supremely transcendent 'over everything' and that his immanence is all pervasive...His universal rule is being exercised to fulfil his ultimate purpose of unifying all things in Christ."[49] God's rule is not limited to the church but extends to the rest of the world. The values of the world could therefore be validated and utilized to meet the moral aspirations for the church as it relates to God's plan for the cosmos.

Second, there is scattered evidence to suggest that the call for differentiation is only part of the formative process of a group (church) that will be instrumental in God's vision for the cosmos, celestial and terrestrial. This universal vision is more expressed in the τὰ πάντα clauses[50] and the unification of all things in Christ. The phrase τὰ πάντα denotes the totality of God's providence in Christ (1.11), and it is the antecedent for all things done in secret in 5.11-13. The nuance of the expression in 4.15 is a debated matter[51] but most of its other appearances denote a form of *terminus technicus* for the world/cosmos. Τὰ πάντα in 1.10 refers to the cosmos/universe. According to Ephesians, God has exalted Christ and made him the cosmic head (1.20-23), but his jurisdiction is

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[48]Marcus Aurelius, *Med.* 7.6

[49]O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 285.

[50]Eph 1.10, 11, 23; 3.9; 4.10, 15; 5.13.

[51]Meyer, *Kirche und Mission,* 260, Howard, "The Head/Body Metaphors of Ephesians, 355-356. Cf. Also Lincoln, 260-261 and Schnackenburg, *Ephesians,* 191. The argument is whether it refers to the cosmos or functions as an adverbial accusative referring to the extent of growth being envisaged for those who are in Christ. The latter reading seems plausible as it takes its immediate context into account.

currently limited to the elect until a future aeon when the cosmos will be summed up in him (1.9-10).[52] As Lincoln points out,

> It is from within the context of the church that the harmonious cosmic consummation is viewed, so that the church which participates in the benediction (1.3ff.) is brought to realize that the salvation with which it has been blessed centres in the same comprehensive Christ in whom God is working to restore all things.[53]

Similarly, τὰ πάντα refers to the cosmos in 1.23[54] where Christ is in the process of filling the cosmos/τὰ πάντα, though currently he is the fullness of the church.[55] "The church is fullness, in the sense that it is the locus where Christ's cosmic rule has already been realized."[56] O'Brien puts it more succinctly:

> Ephesians points to the summing up of the universe in Christ as the final goal of God's plan which has *not yet* been realized. The content of the mystery has already been disclosed (1.9), and as a result of his son's exaltation God has already placed all things under Christ's feet and appointed him to be Head over everything (vv.20-22).[57]

Furthermore, Christ descended and ascended[58] cosmic realms in order to fill τὰ πάντα, the cosmos (4.10). Best reckons that τὰ πάντα in 4.10 "can only mean the cosmos."[59] The exaltation of Christ to cosmic headship and the goal to fill the cosmos or for God to sum up all things in him is crucial to our understanding of differentiation in the letter. The world is not outside God's plan, and the believers are not being urged to withdraw or isolate themselves. Conversely, the church is the microcosm of God's macro plan for the cosmos. Presumably, the outsiders are not excluded in God's cosmic vision. The

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[52]Van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline School,* 156-157. Also Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 34.

[53]Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet,* 144.

[54]See O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 151. O'Brien explains that the use of τὰ πάντα in 1.23 refers to both the physical and the metaphysical world, the cosmos as a whole.

[55]Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 77. Schnackenburg, *Ephesians,* 83-84 and Arnold, *Power and Magic,* 84-85.

[56]Van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline School,* 166.

[57]O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 114-115.

[58]See Larry J. Kreitzer, "The Plutonium of Hierapolis and the Descent of Christ into the 'Lowermost Parts of the Earth' (Ephesians 4.9)," *Biblica* 79 (1998): 392-393. Kreitzer claims that the descent of Christ into the underworld is an allusion to some underground pagan rituals in Hierapolis.

[59]Best, *Ephesians,* 387.

current soteriological particularism is therefore part of a wider cosmic vision. Therefore the position of the church is that of strength and not fear of intimidation or retreat from the outside world, as its existence is instrumental in God's plan to fill the cosmos. This could be explained in terms of God's imperialist movement whose current distinct identity and privileges will ultimately be extended to the rest of the world.[60]

Moreover, God's initiative to reveal τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτου marks an eschatological fulfillment of that which had been hidden hitherto in accordance with his salvific plan in Christ (1.9; 3.3, 4, 9;6.19)[61] and which will have eschatological culmination in τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν ([1.9, 10] cf. LXX Dan 2.21; 4.37; Tob 14.5; 4 Ezra 4.37; *2 Apoc Bar* 40.3'; 1QS 4.18; 1QM 14.14; 1QpHab 7.2,13).[62] Time and event are inseparable in 1.9-10 and "their fullness denotes a completion, or an end point to time which will be identical with the summing up of all things in Christ."[63] The

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[60]This universal perspective of God's plan suggests a tension with the eschatological reward/judgment motif in the letter. It is also possible that the judgment/reward themes, which appear as the basis for praxis, may be serving the purpose of motivation or something that precedes the ultimate consummation of the plan of God for the world. Clearly, Ephesians invokes eschatological judgment as the reason for which appropriate demeanour needs to be exhibited to match the readers' new status in Christ. First, the author indicates that inappropriate behaviour, such as fornication, impurity or covetousness, has eschatological consequence (5.5). Those who indulge in them will be debarred from inheriting (cf.1.14) 'the Kingdom of Christ and of God.' This is a severe eschatological consequence for moral failure, though the import seems to be a threat to prompt good behaviour. Second, the motif of judgement features in the instruction for slave-master relationships in the *Haustafel*. The slave's conduct is placed within the perspective that good service will be rewarded by the Lord in the eschaton (6.8). The slave master is instructed to avoid threatening his slaves since his impartial master in heaven, who is also the master of his slaves, will judge their conduct on the judgment day (6.9). Thus, masters and slaves in their households are cautioned to take note of the fact that the Lord will reward each individual impartially in the eschaton regardless of one's current social status (6.7-9). It is noteworthy that the nemesis is not used as an indictment on outsiders or as an indication of a blissful future for believers and the eschatological doom of unbelievers. The focus is on the eschatological consequence of moral failure among the believers.

[61]O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 110.

[62]Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 32 and O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 113.

[63]Best, *Ephesians-ICC,* 139. See also Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (London: SPCK, 1977), 44-45.

ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι[64] is therefore an eschatological climax of God's cosmic plan where Christ will be made head over all things in heaven and on earth.[65] Whiteley notes that "this does not, of course, mean that all things will be absorbed in Christ, but that all things are to be brought under one heading, and so under one Head, that the lost unity of the creation is to be restored in Christ."[66] The current consensus is that 1.10 refers to a future summation/unification of the cosmos in Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15.20-28).[67] Ephesians suggests that God in his own design will sum all things up in Christ in the end but it does not explain how this will be actualized.[68] Hillert has rightly cautioned against the use of 1.10 to justify 'universal salvation' since its exact nature is not explained.[69]

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[64]See Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 32-34, Jekov, "Eschatology of Ephesians," 94-97, O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 111-112, G.W. Dawes, *The Body in Question: Metaphor and Meaning in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5.21-33* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 142-144 and Schlier, "κεφαλή, ἀνακεφαλαιόομαι," *TDNT* III. 673-682. They provide a comprehensive study of the word in the history of interpretation and conclude that 'to sum up' or 'to recapitulate' is a good translation for the term in its context in Ephesians. Also John McHugh, "A Reconsideration of Ephesians 1.10b in Light of Irenaeus," in *Paul and Paulinism.* Eds. M.D. Hooker and S.G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982),302-309. McHugh examines the meaning of the word in Irenaeus and concludes that a better rendering in his usage would be 'to recapitulate' and that will in the long round run be a recapitulation of everything that has been said to mankind in the epistle (p.307).

[65]See van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline School,* 151 and Thorsten Moritz, "Summing Up All Things: Religious Pluralism and Universalism in Ephesians," in *One God, One Lord: Christianity in a World of Religious Pluralism* (Eds. Andrew D. Clarke and Bruce W. Winter; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 101-124.

[66]D.E.H. Whiteley, "Christology," in *Studies in Ephesians* (ed. F.L. Cross; London: A.R. Mowbray & co., 1956), 62.

[67]See Best, *Ephesians-ICC,* 140-143, Lincoln, *Ephesians,* 32-35, Muddiman, *Ephesians,* 75-76, O'Brien, *Ephesians,* 111-114 and Stephen S. Sampley, "The Eschatology of Ephesians," *EQ* 28 (1956):155.

[68]See Robin Parry and Chris Partridge, *Universal Salvation?: The Current Debate* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003). This book is a collection of essays on the 'universal salvation' debate. These works do not discuss Eph 1.10 as a proof text for 'salvation for all.' Howard Marshall boldly states in the title of his essay and argues that there is no 'universal salvation' in the NT (pp. 55-76). Marshall does not discuss Eph 1.10 in his examination of various passages that are used to support 'universal salvation.'

[69]Sven Hillert, *Limited and Universal Salvation: A Text-Oriented and Hermeneutical Study of Two Perspectives in Paul* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1999), 228-229.

5.2 SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION FOR THE RHETORIC OF DIFFERENTIATION

The theory of social identity formation has already served as part of the interpretative framework in the textual analysis. The three main dimensions of the theory (cognitive, emotional and evaluative dimensions) will be employed here to explain the rhetoric of differentiation. Unlike ethnic or national identity, the readers have been accorded a new identity by belonging to a group with an ideological framework that defines the nature of their identity, process of recruitment and group norms. The "norms help the individual to structure and to predict her/his environment and they provide a means by which behaviour in the group can be regulated. They facilitate the achievement of group goals and express aspects of the group's identity."[70] Thus, social identity theory is particularly relevant here to explain the nature of the author's rhetoric of differentiation.[71] I have argued that the substance or principles of what has now been formulated into social identity theory were not unknown in the Greco-Roman world. I will now show how the cognitive, emotional and evaluative dimensions of this theory could help to explain differentiation in the paraenesis.

It is apparent that the moral identity of the readers is contingent upon or based on a Christocentric ideological framework. Cognitively, an ideological imprint regarding their identity in Christ will consequently enhance their self-esteem and promote befitting conduct. Brown reckons from a sociological point of view that "if we internalize our group memberships as part of our self-concept it follows that any prestige or value associated with those groups will have implications for our feeling of self-worth."[72]

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[70]Brown, *Group Processes*, 50.
[71]See Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 138.
[72]Brown, *Group Processes*, 22.

Psychologically, their call, election and redemption (1.4; 1.7-8; 4.1) are indicative of a decisive move from a previous state of life to their current status in Christ. God has bountifully given them σοφία and φρόνησις to be able to understand his will (1.8). The author points out clearly that this requires a radical change of mind (4.17-23). The soteriological particularism in the letter reinforces this cognitive or psychological impetus in various ways. They are created anew, not physically but ideologically, through God's work in Christ, to bear the moral image of God himself (2.10; 2.15; 2.24). Throughout the letter, there is repeated emphasis that the locus of their existence is 'in Christ.' Ethical behaviour could therefore be portrayed as the conduct of those who are wise (σοφός) in the Lord (5.15-6.9). The author employs purity language to mark their unique status by referring to them as 'saints' (1.1; 5.3), people with a potential to become a 'holy temple' (2.19) and who are created to exhibit the moral image of God in righteousness and holiness (4.24). These are all geared towards the creation of positive ingroup identity and a negative perception of outsiders who do not share such privileged status. Tajfel reckons that an identity construct has meaning only when it is compared to others.[73] In other words, the sense of a privileged 'us' in relation to an inferior 'them' is an integral part of self-understanding. Ephesians 4.17-21 establishes the scope of the lengthy part of the moral discourse along a similar framework. This emphasis permeates the letter so much that almost every major ethical prescription is punctuated by a statement or motivation that reinforces the essence of their salvific status or mutuality in Christ vis-à-vis outsiders.

As in the emotional dimension of social identity theory, the author employs various mechanisms such as symbolic expressions and kinship language to enhance

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[73]Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories*, 256.

emotional ties, stronger interdependence, solidarity and synergy in his readership. Occasionally, he uses symbolic theological language to reinforce their distinctiveness and to evoke positive emotions among members. Guibernau and Goldblatt indicate that the use of symbols or symbolic language to characterize a group is an effective mechanism to mark group distinctiveness and strengthens 'the consciousness of a community.'[74] For example, a flag or crest conveys meaning and evokes a strong sense of 'collective we' to members of a country or group in question. In the case of a national flag, "a whole sense of meaning is condensed into one sign which is used to represent the nation state."[75] In Ephesians, Jews and Gentiles have been made one in Christ regardless of their ethnic origin (2.11-22). The church is referred to as 'the body,' 'the body of Christ' and 'one body' (1.22-23; 2.16; 3.6; 4.4, 12, 16; 5.23, 29) to mark the union with Christ and interdependence of fellow members. More so, the author underlines their common identity and union in terms of the common things they share in Christ, namely one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father (4.4-6). Elliott reckons that "commonalities of belief and experience (as we find here) strengthen the 'ties that bind' and build bridges that can be traveled in both directions."[76] The readers are portrayed as members of God's family and siblings in the household of God in the attempt to maintain the sense of belonging (see discussion of fictive kinship language). The author promotes mutual relations not only among believers but also in their relationship with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. God is portrayed as a father figure for the church while the readers are referred to as beloved

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[74]Montserrat Guibernau and David Goldblatt, "Identity and Nation," in *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Nation* (London: Routledge: 2000), 137.

[75]Guibernau and Goldblatt, "Identity and Nation," 134.

[76]Elliott, *Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament*, 84.

children (5.1-2). They share solidarity with Christ (2.5-6) and are commanded not to grieve but to be filled by/with the Spirit (5.18). The analysis of the text brought to light various expressions (reciprocal and reflective) in the paraenesis that are meant to promote internal cohesion in the church (cf. 4.25, 28). Thus, the rhetoric of differentiation permeating the paraenesis is part of a strategy to reinforce the readers' identity in Christ (cognitively) and belonging (emotionally) in a manner that cultivates unity and solidarity in the new community. Mutuality is being promoted with emotive expressions. Moreover, the demarcation of identity and moral boundaries is clarified by what socio-anthropologists may call 'evaluative comparisons' in Ephesians.

An evaluative comparison is imperative in identity construction, since the self-understanding of an ingroup and its ethos have meaning only when 'us' is compared to 'them.' An insider-outsider duality is therefore created even where in reality such difference may not exist.[77] Intergroup comparison, accentuation of differences and even exaggeration of the weaknesses of the 'other' are part of the means to make the distinction between 'us' and 'them.'[78] This process "fulfils a human need to simplify and 'bring into focus' the social world by accentuating differences between categories and similarities within categories on dimensions subjectively believed to be correlated with the categories."[79] This is often designed to inform ingroup judgement and perception of the 'other.' Hogg and Abrams explain that "categorization is a fundamental process which generates a unique perceptual distortion (i.e. accentuation)

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[77]Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 21
[78]Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identification*, 23.
[79]Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 90.

that imposes certain limits upon the way we perceive both physical and social objects."[80]

Tajfel has given elaborate discussion of how accentuation and stereotyping shapes group identity.[81]

> Stereotyping is associated with social identity and group membership through the common underlying process of categorization, it must inevitably be influenced by motivational factors involved in self-conceptualization and identity construction: specifically, a motive for positive self-regard or self-esteem which can be satisfied by accomplishing evaluatively positive intergroup distinctiveness in favour of the ingroup.[82]

Meeks reiterates that insider-outsider contrast helps to promote internal cohesion - a collective 'we' versus 'them.'[83] This kind of social construction generates cognitive and attitudinal effect that does not necessarily lead to social stratification,[84] since social boundaries are always negotiable and permeable.

The author of Ephesians reinforces the cognitive imprint he has established with regard to his readers' identity in Christ and their sense of belonging to a unified and privileged entity with evaluative comparisons that demarcate between them and outsiders. He does this on two fronts. First, he indicts their pre-conversion past, which is an embodiment of the current state of outsiders, and contrasts it with their current position in Christ. Second, he makes a distinction between insiders and outsiders in a manner that accentuates the difference between the two, especially as it relates to moral conscience and ethical values. The second chapter of Ephesians (2.1-22) and the early verses of the lengthy paraenetic discourse (4.17-24) depict their pre-conversion state as a world characterized by moral failure and diabolic influence. The readers' new status is

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[80]Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identification,* 73. Also Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans,* 24-27.

[81]Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories,* 143-164. Also Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference,* 138.

[82]Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications,* 74.

[83]Meeks, *First Urban Christians,* 85.

[84]Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories,* 132-133.

contrasted with their past to underscore the difference that exists between them (2.1-10). This soteriological contrast is principally ideological in nature, though the author stresses that it has ethical implications (see discussion below). The pre-conversion past of Jewish and Gentile believers are further depicted as two discordant and irreconcilable groups of people that have now been reconciled in Christ (2.11-22). In fact, the way unbelieving Jews and Gentiles are portrayed suggests a sharp animosity or segregation between them but even here the author seems to exaggerate and stereotypes the nature of Jewish-Gentile relations outside the church in order to emphasize the union in Christ. The paradigm shift from 'then' to 'now' is a crucial cognitive reinforcement for their new identity in Christ. This differentiation is expressed in 4.17-19 where the readers are commanded not to conduct themselves as the Gentile outsiders do.

Furthermore, the writer uses binary oppositions to demarcate between insiders and outsiders, most vividly in the old-new, darkness-light and folly-wisdom contrasts (see chapter 2). The virtue-vice antithesis continues the differentiation where the author implies that the virtues being espoused are 'Christ learned'. Thus, difference is created, accentuated or exaggerated where in reality there is none, in order to prompt the sense of peculiar 'us' vis-à-vis 'them.'[85] This distinction flows into the household code where I have argued that 5.15-6.9 forms a single structural unit to call for appropriate conduct of the wise and Spirit-filled believers[86] vis-à-vis the foolish outsiders. They are set apart by virtue of their new identity in Christ but in reality the substance of the ethical aspirations are moral ideals that are shared by other moralists. Horrell explains that, "it is in

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[85]See David G. Horrell, "'Becoming Christian': Solidifying Christian Identity and Content," in *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches* (Eds. A. J. Blasi et al.; Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2002), 312 and 332.

[86]See Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 265-266.

conjunction with the need to foster a sense of *identity* that the language of distinction plays a particular role, while the underlying ethical values are less distinctive and more reflective of widely shared convictions."[87] It is important that such distinction be made if the readers were to take their new identity and life in the new community more seriously. More so, the claim that the shared values are 'Christ learned' virtues also helps to limit the focus of attention to the community of believers. Thus, the author employs theological statements to redefine common values as Christ-learned values and befitting only to those who are in Christ. In effect, this is standard evaluative comparison that is not meant to be taken literally as a realistic social divide. The stereotyping of outsiders should not be taken to mean that all outsiders are in reality intellectually inept and morally bankrupt. In fact, such a view will stand in contradiction to the position that the author adopted conventional household structure as an integrative mechanism, which will mean that he approves of some values in the outside world.

The paraenesis consistently emphasizes the need to understand their distinctive status and live in a manner that enhances ingroup solidarity. However, this does not mean social withdrawal from outsiders. Horrell explains this well in his analysis of similar features in the undisputed Pauline corpus that, "social interaction remains in a number of respects open, being circumscribed specifically where it connects with the key ideas and practices taken as crucial for defining and maintaining group identity and boundaries."[88] The spiritual warfare in 6.10-20 further underscores the fact that the

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[87]Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 165. Also Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour and Intergroup Behaviour," 43. Both Tajfel and Horrell have explained that the use of evaluative comparisons in group identity formation is mainly ideological, since there could hardly be any distinction between ingroup and outgroup in social behaviour. Horrell sees some of the features I observe here in Ephesians in Paul's rhetoric of distinction and use of shared ethical values in the undisputed letters.

[88]Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference*, 163.

author does not call for withdrawal from society – they are to fight the battle in the moral sphere where diabolic forces are operative and seeking to undermine their current standing with God. The distinction is ideological, and members are supposed to live amidst the rest of society where their distinctiveness would be reflected in exemplary *modus vivendi* (5.11. cf. Mt. 5.16). The church must maintain its identity and ethos as it functions in society.

Intergroup categorization is bound to have an effect on ingroup perception and attitude. Yet, to say that it will lead to withdrawal or that the use of values shared by outgroupers, either in the household code or otherwise, is a recipe for compromise will be farfetched. Every society is made up of small groups of some sort, and though intergroup differences may be more visible in exceptional cases, it is difficult under normal circumstance to identify particular features that set one group apart where its distinction is not marked by ethnicity, race or distinctive outfit.[89] It is therefore not a contradiction to call for differentiation at a rhetorical and ideological level while espousing shared moral values as 'Christ learned' virtues in order to promote unity and solidarity in the church. The author does not seek to impress or prove to the outside world that he has better values that they lack but focuses on promoting positive identity and internal cohesion in the church.

In summary to this section, the nature of differentiation in the letter and the author's use of shared values could be explained in terms of a framework that includes the outside world in God's cosmic vision that will ultimately be actualized through the new community characterized by distinctive identity and praxis, namely the church.

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[89]Henri Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour and Intergroup Behaviour," in *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (ed. H. Tajfel; London: Academic Press, 1978), 43.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The binary oppositions (e.g. old-new, darkness-light and folly-wise) and virtue-vice antitheses (cf. 4.17-5.21) have been understood to be advocating dissociation from behavioural patterns and/or withdrawal from the outside world. However, the household code in 5.21-6.9 is read to have been adopted from Greco-Roman moral traditions in order to integrate the church into the wider society. The notion of an ethic that calls for withdrawal from society or indicts morality in the surrounding society but also aimed to integrate its readers to the same society simultaneously seems inconsistent and leaves a tension in its social outlook. After careful analysis of the rhetoric, substance of ethics and theological framework of the paraenesis in light of moral traditions in its milieu, I have arrived at the following conclusions:

In chapter 2, the analysis of the rhetoric of differentiation shows that the author does not use the device to call for withdrawal from the outside world or to make realistic social comparison in the attempt to dissociate his readers from the surrounding society. Conversely, the author's use of these contrastive patterns is part of his rhetorical strategy to differentiate his readers from outsiders by promoting positive group identity and moral standards that are compatible with their new status in Christ. His portrayal of the outside world in negative terms is therefore an evaluative comparison to indict and differentiate between 'then' and 'now' and 'them' and 'us' in the attempt to promote group identity and unity in the church. It is in this vein that they are admonished not to behave like 'the Gentile' outsiders but to cast away the 'old' and put on their 'new'

identity that is created to bear the moral image of God; to abandon the unfruitful works of darkness so as to produce the fruit of light; and to desist from the foolish ways of the unwise and live in a manner that befits Spirit-filled believers. The new identity is established in the work of God through Christ, and Christology is at the heart of everything that makes the church what it is – its identity, morality and ultimate goal. However, despite the differentiation being made the substance of the author's ethical instructions is largely shared by other Greco-Roman moralists. In other words, the ethics he promotes in this part of the paraenesis is not counter-cultural or distinctively 'Christian.' Rather, the contrastive patterns promote ideological differentiation and its commensurate praxis. By ideological differentiation, I mean the ideological or theological framework that is meant to shape their worldview, self-understanding, moral values and perception of outsiders. Thus, they are set apart by virtue of their new identity in Christ but not instructed to withdraw socially from the rest of society.

In chapter 3, the discussion on virtues and vices in Ephesians is appropriately placed within the framework of differentiation in the paraenesis to show that the author uses the device as a rhetorical strategy to meet group-specific aim. The use of the device and the substance of his ethics are all commonplace in Greco-Roman moral discourse. Contrary to the view that this is meant to prompt social withdrawal or retreat from a morally corrupt world, I have argued that the virtue-vice antithesis was part of a standard moral discourse to promote moral excellence. The author uses the device within a theological framework that limits the scope of ethics to his readers in the attempt to promote internal cohesion in the church. The virtue-vice antithesis is therefore designed to impart ingroup solidarity and not to establish the terms of social engagement or

disengagement with outsiders. Thus, the main difference between Ephesians' use of the virtue-vice antithetical device, as compared to its use by other moralists, is its Christological and ecclesiological framework and how the ethical values are supposed to be exhibited in a community with distinctive identity and ethos.

In chapter 4, I argued that the notion that the structure of the household code was adopted from the wider Greco-Roman society to integrate the church into the wider society for apologetic reasons in Ephesians lacks evidence. I attempted to show that the household code is not a separate textual unit with a different social function from the previous admonitions in 4.17-5.21. I contend that 5.21-6.9 is grammatically and conceptually linked to the previous instruction in 4.17-5.21. I also demonstrated that there is a consistent pattern of differentiation running through 4.17-6.9 in so far as the household code is a continuation of the wisdom-folly contrast, alongside a consistent use of shared ethical values in the paraenesis. The household code is therefore not the only instance where the author uses Greco-Roman moral convention but he uses it throughout his paraenetic discourse. The view that the Ephesians' *Haustafel* is meant to integrate the church into the wider society has therefore been proven to be a misreading of the text. Conversely, the *Haustafel* seeks to promote mutuality in the household of the believers as an extension of the wise-fool antithesis with no overt indication that it is an apologetic response to a particular situation. There is no hint of social engagement of any form with outsiders in the household code of Ephesians. Furthermore, the author does not indicate a departure from a previous household structure (e.g. egalitarian) to adopt the patriarchal structure as an integrative mechanism; neither did I find evidence of an isolated church being urged to integrate into the society. The author makes no

oikos-polis linkage to suggest that it is part of his objective to promote civic order or to enhance the public image of the church. Conversely, he seeks to promote mutuality among members of the household in a manner that corresponds to fictive kinship language in the letter. The Christ-church analogy and the Christocentric nature of the *Haustafel* further underpin the author's intra-church focus. Thus, the household code in Ephesians does not have an apologetic function.

It is important to underline the fact that the author does not make explicit acknowledgement to the effect that the substance of his ethics are shared values, though the comparative analysis showed that there is virtually no difference between the substance of his ethics and that of other moralists. What we have in Ephesians is a consistent and coherent moral discourse in 4.17-6.9 that uses Greco-Roman moral conventions to construct ethics in a Christological framework to enhance positive identity, unity and integrity among its members. If the mere use of shared values is a recipe for compromise or implies an integrative mechanism, then the entire paraenesis should be considered as such. However, the author is consistent in the way he utilizes shared values throughout the paraenesis without compromising the distinctive identity of the church. In fact, it would be unreasonable to suggest that he should have refrained from the ethical traditions, rhetoric and literary devices of his day in order to create his own set of vocabulary and uniquely 'Christian' ethic. It is only pragmatic and reasonable that he uses the language and devices that will meet both the logic of his readers as well as his ethical aspirations.

The current standing of the church in Ephesians and its moral obligations are not temporary measures to isolate them from a corrupt world or to appease the outsiders but

a part of God's cosmic plan, which was set before the foundation of the world (1.4). The church is the microcosm of God's macro vision for the world. Christ, who currently fills the church, will ultimately fill the cosmos (1.22-23; 4.10). The notion that Christ is filling the cosmos or the cosmos will be summed up in him in the eschaton further underpins this vision. As Couch puts it, "to unite all creation under Christ's authority when the appointed time comes is the supreme, final aim of God's mission."[1] Therefore, the church exists and functions from the position of strength in the world, not as a vulnerable entity that needs to compromise for survival or escape from the world. Socially, an isolation or separation from the rest of the world would rather undermine its role in God's cosmic plan. Moreover, any compromise on their ethical position, even for apologetic reasons, would amount to voluntary concession in the warfare against evil spiritual forces, which is being fought in the ethical sphere (6.10-20).

Finally, the readers of Ephesians are urged to be set apart in ideological terms from outsiders and exhibit the moral image of God in holiness and righteousness. The substance of the moral aspirations for them is shared ethical values, not a counter-cultural ethic, and they are being urged to live up to the highest moral standards, which are akin to the behaviour that befits their 'calling'. However, the author accentuates the insider-outsider difference by portraying outsiders consistently in dark terms and implying that the values he promotes are 'Christ learned' virtues in the attempt to promote positive identity and solidarity in the church.

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[1]Beatriz Melano Couch, "Blessed Be He Who Has Blessed: Ephesians 1.3-14," *IRM* 77 (1988): 213.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The conclusions drawn from the discussion on the paraenesis of Ephesians present three main issues that may be explored in a further study. The first issue is the hermeneutical implications of 'what constitutes Christian ethics' in an attempt to apply Ephesians to a Christian context in today's world. For example, Ephesians endorses slavery and describes slave duty as the 'the will of God,' but the subject of slavery evokes different sentiments and is by no means acceptable among black Americans or some sub-Saharan Africans. Could we then assume that the values being promoted in the letter are normative and timeless Christian virtues for all cultures? What if the Greco-Roman values shared by the author are not values in a particular culture of a modern Christian community? If ethics in Ephesians is shared moral values couched in a particular theological framework, as I have argued, then how do we establish what constitutes values today, and from whose perspective? Could we derive universally acceptable ethics from Ephesians? A further study on this matter will shed some light or address important hermeneutical issues in the quest for the relevance of ethics in Ephesians to today's Christians.

Secondly, a careful study may be conducted on the differences between the household codes in the NT with careful attention to how each functions in its context. The current approach that seeks to harmonize NT household codes has led to some generalizations about their functions, as we have seen in the case of Ephesians. In other words, instead of examining their common features, there could be a further analysis of how individual codes function differently in the context in which they appear. For example, I have argued that the social function of the household code in Ephesians is

different from what it is purported to be by those who examine it side by side with Colossians. A further study may explore the nature of similarities and dissimilarities not only with these two but also with the one in 1 Peter and perhaps 1 Tim 2.8-15. This will also clarify how household codes are designed to address different situations in the NT.

Thirdly, it is taken for granted that texts such Ephesians could be used to reconstruct how early Christian communities functioned in pagan contexts, or the state of affairs of the world outside the church. A thorough study on this subject may investigate how to establish the nature of an NT text as the starting point for adopting the right interpretative approach. For example, how could one detect historical facts or concrete historical realities from a letter such as Ephesians - a general letter that is intended for wider circulation? How could an occasional letter that addresses concrete situations or respond to specific issues (e.g. 1 and 2 Corinthians; Galatians) be interpreted differently from a general letter like Ephesians or Romans? A specific study in relation to Ephesians would be able to give a comprehensive account of how Christian existence could be deduced from a prescriptive text without access to how its readers responded or applied its content to their situation.

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